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# SERMONS

ON SEVERAL

SUBJECTS *and* OCCASIONS,

By the moſt Reverend

## Dr. *JOHN TILLOTSON*,

LATE

Lord Archbiſhop of *Canterbury*.

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MDCCLVII.

# SERMON CLXXXIII.

## The uncertainty of the day of judgment, conſider'd and improv'd.

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MARK XIII. 32, 33.

*But of that day, and that hour knoweth no man, no not the angels which are in heaven, neither the* SON, *but the* FATHER. *Take ye heed, watch and pray; for ye know not when the time is.*

THESE words are ſpoken by our SAVIOUR of the day of judgment; for tho' in this chapter, as likewiſe in the xxivth of St. Matthew, and the xxiſt of St. Luke, which are parallel to it, our SAVIOUR diſcourſeth very particularly and largely concerning the eminent appearance of his power and juſtice in the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, which may perhaps ſometimes in ſcripture be called his coming; yet it is plain likewiſe, that he diſcourſeth there concerning his coming to judgment at the end of the world. For we find in the xxivth of St. Matthew, that after our SAVIOUR had foretold his diſciples of the utter ruin of Jeruſalem, they came afterwards to him, to enquire more particularly about it; ver. 3. "And as he ſat "upon the mount of olives, the diſciples came unto "him privately, ſaying, tell us, when ſhall theſe "things be? and what ſhall be the ſign of thy "coming, and of the end of the world?" Where there are two ſeveral queſtions, to which our SAVI-

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OUR returns a diſtinct anſwer. The firſt, when thoſe things he had been ſpeaking of before ſhould be; that is, the things which related to the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, for of that only he had been ſpeaking of before. The other queſtion was "concerning "the ſign of his coming, and of the end of the "world."

The reaſon of their joining theſe two queſtions together, ſeems to be this, (as is very probable from many texts of the new teſtament) viz. that the apoſtles did think (and our SAVIOUR permitted them for a long time to remain under this miſtake) that the end of the world, and the general judgment, would be preſently after the deſtruction of Jeruſalem.

Now to this ſecond queſtion of theirs, concerning the end of the world, and our SAVIOUR's coming to judgment, he gives an anſwer in the latter part of that chapter, ver. 29. "But immediately "after the tribulation of thoſe days, the ſun ſhall "be darkned, and the moon ſhall not give her "light; and then ſhall appear the ſign of the Son "of man in heaven." Not that the general judgment of the world was immediately to follow the deſtruction of Jeruſalem; for there were many other things to intervene, as is manifeſt from St. Luke, chap. xxi. 24. "That the Jews ſhould be led cap"tive into all nations, and Jeruſalem ſhould be "troden down of the gentiles, until the times of the "gentiles were fulfilled." And tho' theſe things be expreſt in a few words, yet they comprehend a long tract of time; for the captivity of the Jews hath continued for above 1600 years, and is not yet at an end. And then after the accompliſhment

ment of these things, it follows, "that there shall SERM. "be signs in the sun and the moon, and then CLXXXIII. "they shall see the SON of man coming in a cloud "with power and great glory." And then he tells them in conclusion, "that these things should be-"gin to come to pass," that is, some of them should happen, "before the end of that generation;" and so they did, for the destruction of Jerusalem was about forty years after. But when the end of all should be, that is, when the day of judgment would happen, he could not tell them the precise time, ver. 36. "But of that day and hour knoweth no "man, no not the angels of heaven, but the FA-"THER only;" and it is added in St. Mark, "neither the SON."

Now by "that day and hour" is meant that famous and terrible time of the general judgment of the world, which St. Peter calls by way of eminency, "the day of the LORD," 2 Pet. iii. 10. "The day "of the LORD will come, as a thief in the night;" that is, it will surprize men suddenly and unexpectedly, because no man can tell when it will be; it will steal upon the world, as a thief does into a house by night. "But of that day and hour know-"eth no man, no not the angels which are in hea-"ven, neither the SON, but the FATHER. Take "ye heed, watch and pray; for ye know not when "the time is."

Having thus cleared all difficulties concerning the general meaning of the Text, that it is to be understood of the day of judgment, and not, as some learned men have thought, of the destruction of Jerusalem, I shall now consider the words more particularly, and they contain in them these two things.

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First, the uncertainty of the day of judgment, as to us, and all other creatures. "But of that day "and hour knoweth no man, no not the angels of "heaven, neither the SON, but the FATHER."

Secondly, that the consideration of the uncertainty of the time, should make us very careful to be always prepared for it. "Take ye heed, watch and "pray; for ye know not when the time is." I shall speak as briefly as I can to both these.

First, our SAVIOUR here declares the uncertainty of the time, as to us, and all creatures, when the general judgment shall be. And to express this the more emphatically, he tells us,

1. That GOD only knows it. "Of that day "and hour, οὐδεὶς οἶδεν, εἰ μὴ ὁ Πατὴρ, none knows, "but the FATHER." For tho' we translate it, "no man," yet in the Greek it is more general, "none knows but the FATHER, that is GOD "only." For the word FATHER is several times in the new testament, not used personally, in way of distinction from "the SON, and the HOLY "GHOST;" but signifies "the deity," the FATHER being *fons & principium deitatis*, "the foun-"tain and principle of the deity."

"Of that day and hour," the word ὥρα is not here to be taken strictly for the measure of time, commonly call'd "an hour;" this were to make our SAVIOUR's expression very flat, after he had denied that "the day" is known, to deny that they know "the hour;" for if they do not know "the "day," much less "the hour." Now in these kind of speeches, the expression ought to rise, and that which is most emphatical ought to be said in the last place; so that it should rather have been, "they

" they know not the hour, no nor the day:" but ὥρα here does undoubtedly ſignify the appointed ſeaſon or time; and ſo the four ſeaſons of the year are by the Greeks called ὧραι; and in this ſenſe the word is moſt certainly uſed by the evangeliſt St. John, chap. vii. 30. " But no man laid hands " upon him," ſpeaking of CHRIST, " becauſe his " hour was not yet come," that is, the time appointed for his ſuffering; and that which in the text is called " hour," is in the next verſe called, καιρὸς, which ſignifies a particular ſeaſon or appointed time. " Ye know not when the time is," that is, the time which GOD hath particularly deſigned and appointed for this great work of judging the world. SERM. CLXXXIII.

2. He excludes from the knowledge of it, thoſe who were moſt likely to know it, if GOD had not abſolutely reſerved it to himſelf. " Of that day and " hour knows none, no not the angels, neither the " SON."

(1.) " Not the angels, which are in heaven;" tho' they be creatures of ſo perfect a knowledge, tho' they be " the miniſters of GOD," and do continually attend upon him, and " behold his face," and underſtand much more of the works of GOD, and his providence in regard to the affairs of the world, than we who live here below in ſo much error and ignorance, that " dwell in houſes of clay, whoſe " foundations are in the duſt:" yet the particular time, when GOD will judge the world, he hath reſerved as a ſecret to himſelf, and not communicated it ſo much as to the angels, who are deſigned to wait upon the great judge of the world, and to make up his train in that ſolemnity. So our SAVIOUR tells us, Matth. xxv. 31. that " the SON of man

SERM. CLXXXIII. "shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels "with him." And so likewise the apostle, 2 Thess. i. 7. that "the LORD JESUS CHRIST shall "be revealed from heaven, with his mighty "angels."

But this is not only hid from "the angels," but, which is yet more, from "the SON" himself. "Of "that day and hour knows none, no not the angels "which are in heaven, neither the SON." This seems strange indeed, that "the SON of GOD," who came from "the bosom of his FATHER," and therefore is more likely than any to know his secrets, that, "he, whom GOD had ordained to be "the judge of the world," into whose hands he had committed that great trust and authority, should not be acquainted with the time of this judgment: nay, that "he in whom are all the treasures of wisdom "and knowledge, and in whom the divinity does "substantially reside," should not know this time, this seems incredible, but that he himself hath told us so. It was indeed a common saying among the Jews, that the time of the end of the world was revealed to none: but yet one would think, the SON were always excepted. Nay how can it well be otherwise, if we believe him to be GOD? And indeed the fathers, in their disputes with the Arians, have mightily puzzled themselves about this text.

Some, and those of no small account, have understood these words, as if our SAVIOUR only intended to put off his disciples from a more particular enquiry about this matter; not that he was ignorant of the day of judgment, but that he did not know it, so as to reveal it to them: which is by no means to be admitted, not only because it looks too

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like the equivocation of the jeſuits, but likewiſe becauſe the ſame may be ſaid of the angels; ſince it is no otherwiſe denied of the angels, that they know this time, that it is of the SON. Others ſay, that his humane nature was not ignorant of the day of judgment, but that it did not know this of itſelf, but by virtue of its union with the divine nature. But our SAVIOUR abſolutely ſays, that the SON did not know it. And therefore others more reaſonably have diſtinguiſhed between his humane nature and divine; and though as GOD he could not be ignorant of any thing, yet his humane underſtanding did not know it. And it is not unreaſonable to ſuppoſe, that the divine wiſdom which dwelt in our SAVIOUR, did communicate itſelf to his humane ſoul according to his pleaſure; and ſo his humane nature might at ſome times not know ſome things. And if this be not admitted, how can we underſtand that paſſage concerning our SAVIOUR, Luke ii. 52. that "JESUS grew in wiſ- "dom and ſtature;" or as the word ἡλικία may more fitly be tranſlated "in age, and in favour "with GOD and man?" For if the humane nature of CHRIST did neceſſarily know all things by virtue of its union with the divinity, he could not then, as man, be ſaid "to grow in wiſdom."

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And this I think may be ſufficient for the clearing of this difficulty, concerning the SON's not knowing the particular time which GOD had appointed for judging the world: and if he did not know it, it is ſurely no reflexion upon his diſciples, if they were ignorant of it, or miſtaken about it. Their infallibility was only in things that were revealed to them, but cannot be imagined to extend to things

not

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not revealed. And thus I have done with the firſt thing, namely, the uncertainty of the time of the general judgment, as to all, but GOD only. "Of "that day and hour knoweth none, no not the an- "gels which are in heaven, neither the SON, but "the FATHER." I proceed now to the

Second thing, which I mainly intended, viz. that the conſideration of the uncertainty of the time ſhould make us very careful to be always prepared for it. "Take ye heed, watch and pray; for ye "know not when the time is." In which words we have,

Firſt, a general caution; "take ye heed." Look to it, that ye be not ſurprized and overtaken by that time. The time being ſo uncertain, they were always in danger.

Secondly, more particular directions how they ſhould demean themſelves in this caſe. And our SAVIOUR directs to two things, vigilancy and prayer; "watch and pray."

Thirdly, there is a reaſon added to enforce this care and diligence, from the uncertainty of the time as to us: "for ye know not when the time is."

From whence I ſhall obſerve by the way, the great goodneſs of GOD to us, and his ſingular care of us. That as he is gracious and merciful to us, in giving us the knowledge of thoſe things which are neceſſary and uſeful for us to know; ſo no leſs in keeping us ignorant of other things, which are not only not neceſſary for us to know, but which it would be very much to our harm and prejudice, to have the knowledge of them communicated to us. GOD hath acquainted us with whatever is neceſſary to direct and excite us to our duty; but he hath purpoſely

poſely concealed from us thoſe things which might tend to make us ſlothful and careleſs, negligent and remiſs in it. He hath not acquainted us with the ſecrets of his decrees and providence; but hath reſerved theſe in his own power; becauſe it would be really to our diſadvantage to have the knowledge of them. If we knew all events before-hand, and how and when all things would happen, we ſhould be too much concerned about ſome things, and too little about others; and therefore GOD hath, in great wiſdom and goodneſs, afforded us the knowledge of thoſe things which are moſt proper and uſeful for us, whereby we may be inſtructed in our duty, and encouraged and ſtirred up to it. Job xxviii. 28. "Unto man he ſaith, the fear of the LORD, that "is wiſdom; and to depart from evil, is underſtand-"ing." This is the knowledge which is fit for us, and which no man is deſtitute of, but by his own fault, and groſs neglect of himſelf. SERM. CLXXXIII.

So that GOD is very good to us, both in revealing ſome things to us, and in hiding other things from us; particularly thoſe things which we are ſpeaking of, concerning the time of the end of the world, and the judgment of the great day. Which did men certainly know to be ſo far off, as it really was in our SAVIOUR's time, and may perhaps now be, it would very much abate the force and awe of it upon the minds of men; for then men would think themſelves ſafe, till death ſhould remove them out of the world. But when, for any thing we know, the general judgment of the world may overtake us the next moment; this conſideration gives a great deal of weight to all the reſt, and is apt to ſtrike a particular terror into men.

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men. What man would not be afraid to offend, if he did not know but that the next moment he ſhould be brought to his trial, before a ſevere and impartial judge? So that for this reaſon, GOD hath in great kindneſs to us concealed this matter from us, and like a wiſe and good father, inſtead of gratifying our curioſity, hath conſulted our real benefit and advantage.

Beſides this, that it is always uſeful to the world to be kept in awe by the continual danger and terror of an approaching judgment, there ſeems to have been a more particular reaſon why our SAVIOUR would have the diſciples and firſt chriſtians ignorant of this thing; for which reaſon he diſcourſed ſo to them concerning it, as that they might rather apprehend, that the end of all things was at hand, and might probably happen in their time. And thus it ſeems his diſciples underſtood his ſpeech concerning St. John, as if "he ſhould not die till "our LORD came to judgment." And the apoſtles, in ſeveral of their exhortations, ſeem to urge chriſtians from this very conſideration, of the nearneſs of the general judgment. So St. Paul, Phil. iv. 5. "Let your moderation be known to all men; "the LORD is at hand." And the author to the Hebrews, chap. x. 25. encourageth chriſtians to conſtancy in their profeſſion upon the ſame account, "not forſaking the aſſembling yourſelves together, "as the manner of ſome is; but exhorting one ano-"ther, and ſo much the more, becauſe the day ap-"proacheth." So likewiſe St. James, chap. v. 9. "Grudge not one againſt another, brethren, leſt ye be "condemned: behold, the judge ſtandeth at the door." And St. Peter tells us, that ſeveral impious men

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ſcoffed at them upon this account, as if the apoſtles had been deceivers in this matter, and therefore ſaid, "where is the promiſe of his coming?" as it were upbraiding them, for putting men in a vain expectation of it. SERM. CLXXXIII.

And it was no inconvenience at all, that the apoſtles and firſt chriſtians had this apprehenſion of the nearneſs of that time; for no conſideration could be more forcible to keep them ſtedfaſt in their profeſſion, and to fortify them againſt ſufferings, than a perſuaſion of the approach of that day, wherein thoſe who ſuffered for CHRIST ſhould be ſo glorioufly rewarded; and thoſe who for fear of ſuffering fell off from him, ſhould be ſo terribly puniſh'd. And nothing could be more proper and powerful, to wean their affections from the love of this world, and to make them willing to part with any thing in it, than to apprehend that there would ſhortly be an end of it, and then all the enjoyments of it would ſignify nothing. So that their ignorance in this matter was, by the providence of GOD, admirably fitted for the animating and encouraging of chriſtians to a great zeal and conſtancy in the profeſſion of their faith, and in the propagating of it, as thinking they had but a little while to do this great work in.

And it will be in all ages to the end of the world, a good argument to men to vigilancy and conſtant preparation; becauſe if they be remiſs and careleſs, the great judge of the world may "come in a day "that they think not of, and at an hour when they "are not aware." But to return to the particulars I propounded to ſpeak to from the words.

Firſt,

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First, here is a general caution, "take ye heed;" look heedfully to it, that ye be not surprized and overtaken by that time: for being uncertain when it will happen, ye are always in danger. But because this general caution is only premised by our SAVIOUR, to make way for the more particular directions, therefore I shall not insist upon this, but in the second place proceed to them. And they are these two; "watch and pray."

I. Vigilancy, which is a large duty, and comprehends under it the whole care of a christian life; all that watchfulness and preparation which we ought to use, that we be not surprized by that terrible day; that we be not found in such a condition, as slothful and negligent servants used to be in, when their lord comes suddenly upon them, and finds all things in confusion and disorder. And to this our SAVIOUR alludes several times in his exhortations to watchfulness: Luke xii. 35, 36. "Let your loins be girded "about, and your lamps burning, and ye yourselves "like unto men that wait for their LORD. Blessed "are those servants, whom the LORD when he "comes shall find watching." And, ver. 40. "Be "ye therefore ready also; for the SON of man "cometh at an hour when ye think not." So that this watchfulness implies a continual care of our lives and actions, that we be always in such a posture as we would be willing the great judge of the world should take us in, doing those things which we should not be ashamed to own, if he should come suddenly upon us, and summon us before his tribunal; and avoiding those things which would be matter of shame and confusion to us at his appearance. Luke xxi. 34, 35, 36. where our SAVIOUR giveth this

this caution, he inſtanceth in ſome particular ſins, which are more directly contrary to this "vigilance;" as intemperance, and an inordinate love and care about earthly things. "Take heed to yourſelves, leſt your "hearts be overcharged with ſurfeiting and drunken- "neſs and the cares of this life, and ſo that day come "upon you unawares: for as a ſnare ſhall it come "on all that dwell on the face of the whole earth. "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may "be accounted worthy to eſcape all thoſe things that "ſhall come to paſs, and to ſtand before the SON "of man." SERM. CLXXXIII.

It would be a large work to deſcend to all particulars, whereby we ſhould expreſs our care and vigilance. I ſhall mention but a few; but ſuch as will comprehend moſt others under them.

1. We ſhould reſolve without delay, to put ourſelves into that ſtate and condition, in which we may not be afraid judgment ſhould find us. It is to be feared, that a great part of mankind are in that looſe and negligent poſture, in the time of their health and proſperity, in which if the great judge of the world ſhould ſurprize them, and bring them to a ſpeedy trial, it would go ill with them; their caſe would be ſad and deplorable beyond all imagination, infinitely ſadder than of a malefactor ſtanding before an earthly judge, guilty of great and notorious crimes, and continually expecting the ſentence of death to be paſs'd upon him. Such is the condition of all impenitent ſinners, who have lived careleſs and diſſolute lives, without any ſerious conſideration of their future ſtate, or preparation for it; who have in the general courſe of their lives neglected GOD and religion, and a great many neceſſary and eſſential parts of

SERM. CLXXXIII. of their duty, and have indulged themſelves, either in a continual courſe of impiety and wickedneſs, or of ſenſual pleaſures and vanity. What ſhall become of thoſe whom the judge of the world ſhall find in this condition, either actually wicked, or wretchedly ſecure?

Nay, thoſe who do in ſome meaſure and degree mind religion, how few of them live under "the "powers of the world to come," have "their loins "girded about, and their lamps burning," and are habitually ſo prepared, as if they were in a continual expectation of the coming of their LORD? So that in the ſecure and negligent poſture that moſt men live, even the better ſort of men, if judgment ſhould overtake them, how few could be ſaved? For this cauſe "GOD is long-ſuffering to men, becauſe "he is not willing that any ſhould periſh, but that "all ſhould come to repentance." And if he ſhould not by his merciful providence awaken many men to conſideration and care of themſelves, and by ſome great affliction, or long ſickneſs, put men upon ſerious thoughts, and give them the ſpace and opportunity to recollect themſelves, to make up their accounts, and ſo make their peace with GOD, and to put themſelves into a better poſture for another world, than they uſually are in the time of their health and proſperity, it is very much to be feared, that the greateſt part of thoſe who are tolerably good, would be deſtroyed in their ſecurity.

But this patience of GOD will not always laſt; but "the day of the LORD will come as a thief in "the night," and will ſurprize the careleſs world all at once, and give them no time "to trim up their "lamps," and "to get oil," if they be not provided

vided already; but in an inſtant the door will be ſhut againſt them, and they ſhall never enter into the kingdom of GOD. This day hath not yet happen'd; but it will certainly come, and, as our SAVIOUR ſays, "will come as a ſnare upon all them that dwell "upon the face of the whole earth." And "bleſ- "ſed is that ſervant, whom his LORD when he "comes ſhall find ready."

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So that our firſt care muſt be to get out of this dangerous ſtate of ſin and ſecurity; "to break off "our ſins by repentance," that we may be capable of the mercy of GOD, and at peace with him, before he comes to execute judgment upon the world: for 'till this be done, we are every moment in danger; and if death or judgment ſhould overtake us in this impenitent ſtate, we are loſt beyond recovery.

2. After this great work of repentance is over, we ſhould be very careful how we contract any new guilt, by returning to our former ſins, or by the groſs neglect of any part of our duty. A true and ſincere repentance will put us into a ſafe condition: but then we muſt take heed, that we do not repent of our repentance, and bring ourſelves into danger again, by ſtarting aſide from thoſe good reſolutions, which we had ſo ſolemnly taken up. For every deliberate and preſumptuous ſin that we are guilty of after our repentance, does endanger our ſtate, and ſhake the foundations of our peace: but if we relapſe into our former evil courſe, or after our repentance we allow ourſelves in the habitual practice of any known ſin, either our repentance was inſincere before, or if it were true for the time, we are fallen from it, and all that we have done ſignifies nothing, and we have the whole work to begin

SERM. CLXXXIII. again. And if the judgment of GOD ſhould overtake us, before we have renewed our repentance, and reformed our lives, we ſhould be found in the number of "the ungodly, who cannot ſtand in judg-"ment." So that, as it concerns us to make haſte out of an impenitent ſtate, ſo no leſs to order our converſation afterwards with great vigilancy and care: leſt by relapſing into our former ſins, and being ſurpriſed in them by the judgment of GOD, we fall into condemnation.

3. Let us neglect no opportunity of doing good, but always be employing ourſelves, either in acts of religion and piety towards GOD, or of righteouſneſs and charity towards men, or in ſuch acts as are ſubordinate to religion; I mean the works of a lawful calling, in which, if we demean ourſelves with diligence and good conſcience, we may be ſaid to ſerve GOD, and to live in his fear, becauſe we are govern'd by the rules of religion, all the while we are about our worldly buſineſs, and providing for the neceſſities of this life in an honeſt and induſtrious way.

More particularly, we ſhould ſtrictly charge ourſelves, according to our eſtate and opportunities, to be very much in the works of mercy and charity; remembring that our SAVIOUR hath repreſented this as a ſpecial matter of enquiry at the judgment of the great day, how we have acquitted and diſcharged ourſelves in duties of this kind; and that nothing does more immediately qualify us for the mercy of GOD, when we ſhall come to ſtand before his judgment-ſeat, than to have ſhewn mercy to our brethren: as on the other hand, the ſcripture hath terribly threatned, that "he ſhall have judgment without "mercy,

" mercy, that hath ſhewed no mercy." By theſe and all other acts of a good life, we ſhall be in a conſtant readineſs and preparation for the coming of our LORD. And, oh, what a happineſs and comfort will it be to us, to be found by him thus employed! " Bleſſed is that ſervant whom his LORD " when he cometh ſhall find ſo doing." I proceed, SERM. CLXXXIII.

4. We ſhould often review our lives, and call ourſelves to a ſtrict account of our actions, that " judging our ſelves, we may not be judged," and condemn it " by the LORD." This frequent examination of our ſelves will give us to underſtand our errors and miſcarriages; which, if we ſeriouſly conſider, muſt needs prompt us to repentance, and engage us in purpoſes and reſolutions of amendment. And the practice of this is certainly the beſt way to keep our accounts clear, and to prevent that horrible confuſion which we ſhall be in, if judgment ſhould ſurpriſe us unawares, when we have the guilt of great and manifold ſins unrepented of, lying upon our conſciences, like a heavy weight, ready to ſink us into eternal perdition. Beſides, that this ſtrict and frequent examination of our actions, will be an excellent means to make us more careful for the future to avoid thoſe faults and miſcarriages which we have obſerved in ourſelves before. We ſhould be aſhamed to fall into thoſe errors again, for which we have ſo lately and ſeverely cenſured and condemned ourſelves.

5. Another part of our preparation for the coming of our LORD, is, an humble truſt and confidence in the virtue of his death and paſſion, as the only meritorious cauſe of the remiſſion of our ſins,

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and the reward of eternal life. Tho' we be regenerated and renewed by the HOLY GHOST, and by the aſſiſtance of GOD's grace enabled to perform works of righteouſneſs, and, as is ſaid of Zachary and Eliſabeth, "to live in all the commandments "and ordinances of the LORD blameleſs;" that is, in the general courſe of our lives, to yield a ſincere obedience to the laws of GOD: yet becauſe "in many things we offend," and our beſt righteouſneſs is very imperfect, and falls extremely ſhort of that exact and ſtrict duty, which the law of GOD requires; and if it were perfect, our obedience for the future could make no reparation to the juſtice of GOD for paſt ſins and tranſgreſſions; therefore we cannot hope for our own righteouſneſs to be juſtified and accepted with GOD, and upon the merit of it to have our ſins pardon'd, much leſs to be rewarded with eternal life. GOD indeed of his infinite mercy is pleaſed, upon our repentance, to pardon our ſins paſt, and upon our ſincere obedience to give us eternal life; and without theſe qualifications we ſhall never be made partakers of theſe bleſſings; except we repent, our ſins ſhall not be forgiven us; and "without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the LORD." But then it is not for the merit of our repentance and righteouſneſs, that theſe bleſſings are conferr'd upon us; but for the meritorious obedience and ſufferings of our bleſſed SAVIOUR: that moſt acceptable ſacrifice of himſelf, which he offer'd to GOD in our ſtead, and in our behalf, hath purchaſed and procur'd theſe benefits for us, and "we are "accepted in his beloved SON," and "juſtified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in "JESUS CHRIST;" and therefore "not for any

" any works of righteouſneſs which we have done, SERM.
" but of his mercy he ſaves us." And here we CLXXXIII.
are to fix our hopes of juſtification and ſalvation, viz. upon that perfect propitiation and ſatisfaction, which CHRIST by the ſacrifice of himſelf once offer'd hath made for the ſins of the whole world. For the alone merit of this ſacrifice, GOD is graciouſly pleaſed to forgive us all our ſins, upon our true repentance, and to reward our ſincere, tho' very imperfect obedience, with eternal life. So that " through " faith in the blood of CHRIST," not by confidence in ourſelves and our own righteouſneſs, " we obtain remiſſion of ſins, and eternal life." And it is not only in itſelf great arrogance, but great ingratitude to our bleſſed redeemer, " who " gave himſelf for us," to aſcribe that to the merit of our own righteouſneſs, or the merits of the ſaints, which nothing in heaven or earth, but " the pre- " cious blood of CHRIST, who was a lamb with- " out ſpot or blemiſh," could have purchaſed for us. And it is argument and encouragement enough to holineſs and obedience of life, that without it we cannot ſee GOD; and by it we are qualified for that happineſs which CHRIST hath purchaſed for us, and, as the apoſtle expreſſeth it, are made meet " to be " partakers of the inheritance of the ſaints in light."

6. And laſtly, to awaken and maintain this vigilancy and care, we ſhould often repreſent to our minds the judgment of the great day, which will certainly come, tho' we know not the time of it. And if any conſideration in the world will make men watchful and diligent, certainly this will, that the judgment of GOD continually hangs over them, and may ſeize upon them at any time; nay, for

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ought we know, the judgment of GOD may now be "ſtanding at the door," and be ready to ruſh in upon us, whilſt we are ſo negligent and ſecure. For this day, whenever it ſhall be, will come ſuddenly, and ſurpriſe the careleſs world, when they leaſt think of it, and look for it. So our LORD himſelf hath foretold, that "as a ſnare it ſhall come "upon all them that dwell on the face of the whole "earth:" that is, the greateſt part of mankind ſhall be taken unprepared, when they are unprovided for it; nay, when they are generally lull'd aſleep in a ſtupid ſecurity and infidelity; when the world is grown atheiſtical, and do hardly believe any ſuch thing as a future judgment. So our SAVIOUR ſeems to intimate, Luke xviii. 8. "When the SON "of man cometh, ſhall he find faith upon earth?" And if this be a mark and token of the general judgment, we have too much cauſe to apprehend that it is drawing on apace: for never was there any age, ſince the general flood, that we know of, when "iniquity did ſo abound," and the infidelity of mankind was ſo full, ſo great, and ſo general; when profaneneſs and atheiſm, the open contempt of GOD and religion, was ſo raging and violent; and when, as our LORD ſays, there was ſo little "faith to be found on the earth," whether by faith we underſtand the belief of the principles of religion, or the fidelity of men one towards another. For was there ever any age, wherein falſe accuſation, perjury and ſubornation were more rife and impudent? wherein the reverence of an oath was ſo loſt, and the ſacred obligation of it in ſo little regard among men. So that if the great judge of the world ſhould delay his coming, humane ſociety ſeems ready

to

to diſband and diſſolve of itſelf, for want of mu- SERM.
tual truſt and confidence among men to hold it to- CLXXXIII.
gether.

And this want of faith, in both ſenſes, we owe in a great meaſure to popery; which by its artificial ways of falſhood and perjury (which when they have to deal with hereticks, they have upon ſolemn occaſions declared lawful) hath not only weakned, but even deſtroyed the credit of mankind with one another, as we find of late by ſad experience. And as for infidelity in religion, they have not only given great occaſion to it, by the monſtrous abſurdities they have brought into religion; and by overſtraining the faith of men in ſome parts of it, have brought them to a diſbelief of the whole; as is at this day too viſible in many of the moſt knowing perſons of their communion, both in France and Italy: but beſides this, they have in their writings, to gain men to a dependence upon, and ſubmiſſion to the infallibility of their church, undermined the foundation of religion, and induſtriouſly endeavoured to bring men to ſcepticiſm and infidelity; hoping that when they have made men of no religion, they will be fit for theirs, which in too many reſpects is next to none; and in ſome, worſe.

But whether the judgment of the great day be near at hand, or farther off, God alone knows; this is certain, that God hath in great mercy delayed it for a long time, becauſe "he is not willing that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould "come to repentance." And it is no leſs certain that it may come at any time, and will come when men leaſt expect it, when the world is in great ſecurity, and very little apprehenſive of the near-

SERM. CLXXXIII. neſs and danger of it; which is reaſon and argument enough to continual care and vigilancy: for it may come the next hour, the next moment, for any thing we know to the contrary: and whenever it comes, if we be not prepared, it will be too late to begin that work; if "our lamps be gone out," and "we want oil," we cannot provide ourſelves in ſuch a hurry; we ſhall be full of fear and amazement, but we ſhall "find no place for repentance," and a deliberate preparation for our great trial. As the great judge of the world then finds us, ſo will he deal with us; ſuch as our ſtate and condition then is, ſuch will be our ſentence and doom to all eternity. And is not this argument enough to us to be always upon our guard, always watchful and always ready? becauſe "the SON of man may come at an hour "when we think not;" and if we be not then prepared, it will be too late to ſet about it; the opportunity of doing it, and we ourſelves are loſt for ever.

This is the firſt direction our SAVIOUR gives us, continual vigilancy and watchfulneſs over ourſelves in general.

The IId direction is more particular, and that is prayer; "take ye heed, watch and pray." And the practice of this duty of prayer will be of great advantage to us upon theſe two accounts.

1. As it tends to awaken and excite our care and diligence in the buſineſs of religion.

2. As it is, if ſincerely performed, effectual to engage the divine bleſſing and aſſiſtance to ſecond our care and endeavours, and to ſecure them from miſcarriage.

1. It

1. It is very apt to awaken and excite our care and diligence in the buſineſs of religion. For whenever we heartily beg of GOD to aſſiſt us by his grace, to any thing that is good, we mind ourſelves of our own duty: and both reaſon and ſcripture will tell us, that we pray to GOD in vain for his help, if we will do nothing ourſelves; that it is groſs hypocriſy, and an impudent mocking of GOD, to implore his grace and aſſiſtance, if we be not reſolved to put forth our own endeavours. Prayer indeed ſuppoſeth that we ſtand in need of the divine help; but it implies likewiſe a reſolution on our part, to do what we can ourſelves; otherwiſe "we "aſk in vain," and have no reaſon to hope that GOD will hear our prayers, and grant our requeſts though never ſo earneſtly and importunately put up to him.

2. If we uſe our ſincere endeavours for the effecting of what we pray for, prayer is the moſt effectual means to engage the divine bleſſing and aſſiſtance to ſecond our endeavours, and to ſecure them from miſcarriage. And without the aid of GOD's grace, and his bleſſing upon our endeavours, they will all be ineffectual, and ſignify nothing; we ſhall not be able ſo much as "to watch one hour." If GOD be not with us, "the watchman waketh but in vain:" for "the way of a man is not in himſelf, it is not "in man that walketh to direct his ſteps." It is neceſſary therefore, that we continually implore the divine grace, and that we do not rely upon our own ſtrength, and the fickleneſs and uncertainty of our own reſolutions, according to the wiſe advice of Solomon, Prov. iii. 5, 6. "Truſt in the LORD with "all thine heart, and lean not to thine own under-

SERM. CLXXXIII. "ſtanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and "he ſhall direct thy paths." Therefore as ever we hope to perſevere and continue in a good courſe, and to order our lives ſo, as to be in preparation for judgment, let us every day, by continual and fervent prayer, apply ourſelves to the fountain of grace and mercy, for his aid and help, to make us vigilant over ourſelves, and all the actions of our lives; to enable us to "a patient continuance in "well-doing, to keep us from every evil work, "and to preſerve us to his heavenly kingdom."

And to this purpoſe, we have all the encouragement which the aſſurance of the divine goodneſs, and the ſecurity of his never-failing promiſe can give us. It is but aſking and receiving. So St. James tells us, ſpeaking of this heavenly wiſdom to direct us in our chriſtian courſe, ſo as we may "be perfect "and entire wanting nothing." James i. 5. "If "any of you lack wiſdom, let him aſk of God, "who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth "not, and it ſhall be given him." I proceed to the

Third and laſt part of the text, which is the reaſon which our SAVIOUR here adds to enforce our care and diligence in a matter of ſo great concernment, viz. the uncertainty, as to us, of the particular time, when this day of judgment will be. "Ye know not when the time is." Therefore we ſhould always be in expectation of it, always in a readineſs and preparation for it. The certainty of the thing, and that "GOD hath appointed" and determined "a time, in which he will judge the world "in righteouſneſs," though we were ſure this day were far off, ought in all reaſon to make us ever watchful

watchful over ourſelves, and very careful of all our actions, very ſtrict and conſcientious in the diſcharge and performance of every part of our duty. If there were no more but this, that we muſt one day be call'd to a ſtrict account for all the actions of our lives, and receive the juſt recompence of them, and according to the nature and quality of them be ſentenc'd to eternal happineſs, or everlaſting miſery; this alone were a mighty argument. So St. Peter reaſons, 2 Pet. iii. 10, 11, 12. "But the day of the "LORD will come, in the which the heavens ſhall "paſs away with a great noiſe, and the elements "ſhall melt with fervent heat; the earth alſo, and "the works that are therein, ſhall be burnt up. "Seeing then all theſe things ſhall be diſſolved, "what manner of perſons ought ye to be in all holy "converſation and godlineſs; looking for, and "haſting unto the coming of the day of GOD?" that is, making ſpeedy preparation for it. The very expectation of this "terrible day of the LORD," at how great a diſtance ſoever, ſhould make us diligent, that whenever it ſhall be, "we may be "found of him in peace, without ſpot and blame-"leſs."

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But it adds a great deal of awe and force to this argument, to conſider, that for ought we know to the contrary, this judgment may ſurpriſe us at any time; that this very night we may be awakened by the ſound of that mighty trumpet, which ſhall pierce the ears of all the world, and ſummon the living and the dead to judgment. And GOD, who is the lover of ſouls, and deſirous to ſave us any ways, by hope and by fear, by his mercies and by his corrections, by our knowledge and by our ignorance, hath pur-

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posely concealed from us the time of his coming to judgment, to the end we may always be prepared, and that we might continually stand in awe of it; and for fear our LORD should come upon us unawares, might always be in a posture to receive him.

And whatever the secure part of mankind may think, who "put far from them the evil day," how careless and confident soever they may be, it would for all that be a terrible thing to them, all on the sudden, "to see the SON of man coming in "the clouds of heaven, with his mighty angels;" to hear the great "trumpet sound," summoning the dead to arise and come to judgment; to see the whole world in a combustion, and the whole frame of nature ready to dissolve and fall in pieces, "the "sun darken'd, and the moon turned into blood, "and all the powers of heaven shaken, the earth "and all the works that are therein flaming about "us;" to see the dead starting out of their graves, some with great joy, others in a mighty amazement and fright, according to their several expectations of a happy or fearful doom. What a surprise would it be to drowsy and careless sinners, to be thus suddenly and unexpectedly overtaken? How will the profane infidel like to find himself so terribly confuted by his own eyes, and forced to believe that which will make him tremble? It will then be too late for men to think to make their peace with GOD, and to prepare for judgment. And if there were any time for it, the horror and amazement that sinners will then be in, will hinder them from doing any thing. Thus the scripture represents the fearful case of impenitent sinners, who are thus surprised, as not knowing what to do with themselves, nor whither

whither to fly for ſafety, as ready to betake themſelves any whither for ſhelter and refuge, as "calling "upon the mountains and rocks to fall upon them, "and hide them from the face of him that ſits upon "the throne, and from the wrath of the lamb;" hereby ſignifying to us, that ſinners ſhall be in ſuch a conſternation, and ſo deep a deſpair of the mercy of GOD towards them, that inſtead of addreſſing themſelves to him, they ſhall turn their ſupplications to "the mountains and rocks," as being more exorable than he. SERM. CLXXXIII.

But this poſſibly may not be our caſe; this dreadful day may not come in our days; and yet it is madneſs to run a venture in a matter of ſuch moment: but if it ſhould not, I muſt tell you, that the caſe of a dying ſinner is not much different, who hath neglected GOD and religion in his life-time, and would never think of betaking himſelf to him, or making any ſubmiſſion, till his juſtice be ready to cut him off. And how ſecure and careleſs ſoever ſinners may be now, no man knows how ſoon he may be reduced to the very laſt opportunity of making his peace with GOD, and may be brought into thoſe ſad and miſerable ſtraits, that no man that is in his wits would be in for all the world; that he may have nothing that can give him the leaſt hope of being ſaved from eternal perdition, but a ſudden and confuſed, and in all probability, an ineffectual repentance, nothing but this one plank to truſt to, which it is ten thouſand to one whether it ever bring him to ſhore.

Therefore be wiſe, ſinner, in time, and ſeize upon the preſent opportunities of life, and improve them with all thy might, with all poſſible care and diligence,

gence, leſt judgment find thee unprepared; or in caſe GOD in mercy to the world ſhould delay it yet longer, leſt death ſeize upon thee careleſs and unprovided. And when that is once in view, it is but very little that can be done by way of preparation: for as "there is no counſel nor wiſdom, no "work nor device in the grave, whither we muſt "go," ſo there is very little when we are come near to it; and therefore, "bleſſed is that ſervant, whom "his lord when he cometh ſhall find watching."

# SERMON CLXXXIV.

## The certainty, and the bleſſedneſs of the reſurrection of true chriſtians.

1 THESS. iv. 14.

*For if we believe that* JESUS *died, and roſe again; even ſo them alſo which ſleep in* JESUS *will* GOD *bring with him.*

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THE words which I have read are an argument of the bleſſed reſurrection of good men to eternal life, grounded upon the reſurrection of CHRIST. In the verſe before, the apoſtle comforts chriſtians, concerning their brethren that were already departed in the faith of CHRIST, that there was no reaſon why they ſhould ſo immoderately grieve for them. "But I would not have "you ignorant, brethren, concerning them which "are aſleep, that ye ſorrow not, even as others that "have

" have no hope;" that is, as the heathens do, who mourn for their dead friends in ſo grievous a manner, as if they were utterly extinguiſhed by death, and they had no imagination of any life beyond this. And thus we find the apoſtle elſewhere deſcribing the ſtate of the heathen world; Eph. ii. 12. that " they were aliens from the commonwealth " of Iſrael, ſtrangers from the covenant of promiſe, " having no hope." SERM. CLXXXIV.

But chriſtians ſhould not mourn for their deceaſed friends, as the heathen were wont to do, who had no hope of a better life; becauſe chriſtians profeſs to believe that CHRIST is riſen from the dead, and aſcended into heaven: " for if we believe that JESUS " died and roſe again, even ſo them alſo which " ſleep in JESUS, will GOD bring with him."

There are two things to be explained in the words, before we come to conſider the matter of them.

Firſt, what is meant by " thoſe that ſleep in " JESUS."

Secondly, what by " GOD's bringing them with " him."

Firſt, what is meant by " thoſe that ſleep in " JESUS." Sleep is a metaphor uſed for death, by all ſorts of writers profane and ſacred; and by the ancient chriſtians, the place of burial was called κοιμητήριον, that is, " a ſleeping-place." This metaphor is ſometimes applied to the death of the wicked, but moſt frequently uſed of the death of the righteous, becauſe to them it is truly a reſt. And ſo the prophet, ſpeaking of the death of the righteous, calls it, Iſaiah lvii. 2. " They ſhall enter into " peace, they ſhall reſt in their beds."

And

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And the death of the righteous is very fitly called "a ſleep," both as it is a reſt from labour and pain. "Bleſſed are the dead which die in the LORD; "for they reſt from their labour," Rev. xiv. 13. And likewiſe becauſe ſleep is not final, but in order to waking again. The death of the righteous is not an eternal ſleep of the body, but that ſhall be awakened in the morning of the reſurrection.

But why is the death of good men call'd "a "ſleeping in JESUS? διὰ Ἰησοῦ, for JESUS ſake;" which may ſeem to have ſome particular relation to thoſe who died martyrs for CHRIST; as ſome likewiſe underſtand that text, Rev. xiv. 13. "Bleſſed "are the dead which die in the LORD," that is, that ſuffer for his cauſe; "for they reſt from their "labours," that is, their ſufferings are then at an end. But we ſhall beſt underſtand the meaning of this phraſe, by comparing it with thoſe others which ſeem to be equivalent to it, as 1 Cor. xv. 18. "They "alſo that are fallen aſleep in CHRIST;" ver. 22, "They that are CHRIST's at his coming," that is, they that belong to him, that died in the faith of CHRIST. So likewiſe is this, 2 Theſſ. iv. 16. "The dead in CHRIST ſhall riſe firſt," that is, the chriſtians that are dead before the coming of CHRIST, ſhall firſt be raiſed, before thoſe that are alive ſhall be changed. Heb. xi. 13. "All theſe "died in faith," that is, in firm belief of GOD's promiſe of a better life. So that "to ſleep in "CHRIST, to be CHRIST's, to die in CHRIST, "to die in the faith," do all ſeem to ſignify the ſame thing, viz. to die in the ſtate of true chriſtians. For ſo we underſtand the like expreſſions of "be-"ing in CHRIST," Rom. viii. 1. "He that is in "CHRIST,"

" CHRIST," that is, every ſincere chriſtian; and of SERM.
" abiding in CHRIST," John xv. 4. " He that abid- CLXXXIV.
" eth in me." So " to die in CHRIST," is to die a true chriſtian, in the faith and obedience of the goſpel.

And it is obſervable that in the phraſe and ſtile of the new teſtament, " we are ſaid to die all in, and " with CHRIST; to be in him, and to live in him, " and to walk in him," by our ſanctification and obedience; " to die with him," by the mortification of our luſts; " to riſe with him," by our renovation to a new life; " to aſcend with him into heaven," and to have " our life hid with CHRIST in GOD, " by our heavenly affections and hopes; and by death, " to ſleep in him."

But before I paſs over this phraſe of " ſleeping " in JESUS," there is one difficulty more about the ſleep of the ſoul, which ſeems to be countenanced from this text, " thoſe that ſleep in JESUS, ſhall GOD " bring with him;" as if the apoſtle ſpake here of the ſouls of good men which had been aſleep, and CHRIST ſhould bring with him to be united to their bodies, which ſhould be raiſed; as likewiſe from the whole tenor of the apoſtle's diſcourſe about the reſurrection, 1 Cor. xv. where the apoſtle ſays nothing of the living of the ſoul before the body be raiſed; as if the ſoul ſeparated from the body were in a ſtate of inſenſibility, till the reſurrection. But the true anſwer to this is, that neither our SAVIOUR in his diſcourſe of the reſurrection, nor St. Paul, in the xvth chapter to the Corinthians, nor here in this text, do keep cloſely to the proving of the reſurrection of the body; but of a bleſſed immortality after this life, againſt the Sadducees, who ſaid " there was no reſur- " rection, neither angel nor ſpirit." But ſometimes they prove that there is a life after death; and ſome-

times that at the reſurrection, the ſoul ſhall be joined to a ſpiritual and heavenly body, and that the whole man ſhall enjoy perfect bliſs and happineſs.

But this opinion, or rather dream, concerning the ſleep of the ſoul from the time of death, that is, from the time of the ſeparation of the ſoul from the body till the general reſurrection, may be effectually confuted theſe two ways:

1. By taking away the ground of it: and,

2. By producing ſeveral texts of ſcripture, which are utterly inconſiſtent with it. And this I ſhall the rather do, becauſe ſome men have taken a great deal of pains to eſtabliſh and prove this opinion; tho' I confeſs I do not well underſtand to what end, becauſe there is as little comfort as truth in it.

1. By taking away the only ground that I know of, of this opinion; and that is, from the frequent metaphor and reſemblance in ſcripture of death to ſleep. And indeed thoſe which are dead, are frequently in ſcripture ſaid "to ſleep, or to be fallen "aſleep:" but then (which falls out very croſs to this opinion) this metaphor of ſleep is no where in ſcripture applied to the ſoul, but to the body reſting in the grave, in order to its being awakened and raiſed out of this ſleep at the reſurrection. And thus it is frequently uſed, with expreſs reference to the body, Dan. xii. 2. "Many of them that ſleep in "the duſt of the earth ſhall awake;" and ſurely "ſleeping in the duſt of the earth," can only be applied to the body. And more expreſly yet, Matth. xxvii. 52. "And the graves were opened, and many "bodies of ſaints which ſlept, aroſe. Acts xiii. "36. David, after he had ſerved his own genera-"tion by the will of GOD, fell aſleep, and was laid

"unto

" unto his fathers, and ſaw corruption: but he SERM.
" whom GOD raiſed again, ſaw no corruption." CLXXXIV.
Now " that of David which fell aſleep, and was " buried with his fathers, and ſaw corruption," was certainly " his body," and that of our SAVIOUR which " was raiſed again, and ſaw no corruption," was likewiſe " his body," according to that prediction concerning him, " thou wilt not leave my " ſoul in hell, in *Hades*," by which is plainly meant the ſtate and place of ſouls ſeparated from the body; " nor ſuffer any holy one to ſee corruption," that is, the body of our bleſſed LORD to rot in the grave. 1 Cor. xv. 20. " But now is CHRIST " riſen from the dead, and become the firſt-fruits " of them that ſlept;" that is, the reſurrection of his body out of the grave, is an earneſt and aſſurance that our bodies alſo ſhall be raiſed. And ver. 51. " We ſhall not all ſleep, but we ſhall all be changed;" where the apoſtle undoubtedly ſpeaks both of the death and change of theſe corruptible bodies. And ſo likewiſe the text is to be underſtood of the reſurrection of the bodies of the ſaints, which ſhall be raiſed up by the ſound of the great trumpet, and reunited to their ſouls, that they may in perſon accompany CHRIST at his coming. So that it is " the body," which is every where ſaid in ſcripture " to ſleep," and not " the ſoul," and if ſo, then the only foundation of this opinion is taken away.

2. I ſhall ſhew, that this opinion of the ſleep of the ſoul is utterly inconſiſtent with ſeveral paſſages of ſcripture, which plainly ſuppoſe the contrary; as Luke xvi. 22, 23. where, in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, the different ſtates of good and bad men, immediately after their departure out of

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this life, are deſcribed; but they are ſo deſcribed, that it is evident that the ſouls of neither of them are aſleep. It is ſaid of Lazarus, that "he was car- "ried by the angels into Abraham's boſom," and that there "he was comforted;" and of the rich man, that "he was in hell," and there "tormented "in flames." This was not like to be a ſtate of ſleep and inſenſibility, and the rich man cries out of his torment; and that we may be ſure he was awake, he is ſaid "to lift up his eyes." And there is all the reaſon that can be to conclude, that Lazarus was every whit as ſenſible of the comfort and happineſs that he was in, as the rich man was of his torment. Luke xxiii. 43. where our SAVIOUR ſays to the penitent thief, "this day ſhalt thou be with me in "paradiſe:" but not ſurely to ſleep there 'till the reſurrection. Tho' ſome have endeavoured to avoid the force of this text, by referring "this day" to what goes before, and not to what follows after; as if our SAVIOUR had ſaid; "I ſay unto thee this "day;" and not "this day thou ſhalt be with "me in paradiſe:" which is a fooliſh evaſion, becauſe, "I ſay unto thee," neceſſarily implies the preſent time, and there is no need to add, "this "day;" beſides that there is no ſuch phraſe any where uſed, as "I ſay unto thee this day." Phil. i. 23. "I am in a ſtrait between two, having a de- "ſire to depart, and to be with CHRIST, which "is far better." But if "to be with CHRIST," be to be in a ſtate of ſleep and inſenſibility, how is that ſo much "better" than to be in the body, ſerving GOD and his Church? 2 Cor. v. 6. "Therefore "we are always confident, knowing that while we "ſojourn in the body, we are abſent from the "LORD;

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" LORD; we are confident, I ſay, and willing ra-
" ther to be abſent from the body, and preſent
" with the LORD." But certainly, " to be pre-
" ſent with the LORD," which the apoſtle here affirms that good men are, ſo ſoon as they depart out of the body, muſt needs ſignify a ſtate of happineſs; which " ſleep" is not, but only of inſenſibility. Beſides that the apoſtle's argument would be very flat, and but a cold encouragement to chriſtians againſt the fears of death, that as ſoon as we are dead, we ſhall fall aſleep and become inſenſible. But the apoſtle uſeth it as an argument, why we ſhould be willing to die as ſoon as GOD pleaſeth, and the ſooner the better; becauſe ſo ſoon as ever we quit theſe bodies, " we ſhall be preſent with the LORD," that is, ſhall be admitted in the bliſsful ſight and enjoyment of him; and that whilſt we " abide in the " body," we are detained from our happineſs. But if our ſouls ſleep as well as our bodies, till the general reſurrection, it is all one whether we continue in the body or not, as to any happineſs we ſhall enjoy in the mean time; which is directly contrary to the main ſcope of the apoſtle's argument.

Secondly, what is here meant by " GOD's bring-
" ing with him thoſe that ſleep in JESUS?" In general theſe words ſignify a bleſſed reſurrection, as may be ſeen by the oppoſition; " If we believe that
" JESUS died, and roſe again; even ſo them alſo
" that ſleep in JESUS ſhall GOD bring with him." Where to CHRIST's death is oppoſed " our ſleep-
" ing in JESUS;" and to his reſurrection, " GOD's
" bringing us with him;" that is, his raiſing us out of the grave to accompany him at his coming. But the meaning of this expreſſion will beſt appear, by conſidering

SERM. CLXXXIV. ſidering what follows after the text: "For this we "by the word of the LORD," that is, by ſpecial revelation, "that we that are alive, and remain "at the coming of the LORD, ſhall not prevent "them that are aſleep;" that is, we ſhall not be taken up into heaven before the ſaints who are already dead ſhall be raiſed: but thus it ſhall be, "the "LORD himſelf ſhall deſcend from heaven with a "ſhout, and the voice of an archangel, and with "the trump of GOD, and the dead in CHRIST "ſhall riſe firſt; then we which are alive and re-"main, ſhall be caught up together with them in "the clouds, to meet the LORD in the air." The plain meaning of all which is, that firſt "the dead "in CHRIST" ſhall be raiſed, and taken up to him in the air, to accompany him at his coming, and thus "he ſhall bring them with him;" and then "thoſe who are alive at his coming" ſhall be changed and taken up likewiſe, "to meet the "LORD in the air." And the ſame account the ſame apoſtle gives us, 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52. "Behold, "ſays he, I ſhew you a myſtery," (which is the ſame he had ſaid before in the former text, "this "we ſay unto you by the word of the LORD) I "ſhew you a myſtery" (ſo he calls that which was not revealed to all by our SAVIOUR, but to himſelf particularly) "we ſhall not all ſleep, but "we ſhall be changed;" that is, all ſhall not die, but at the coming of CHRIST many ſhall be found alive and changed; but theſe ſhall have no advantage of thoſe who are dead in CHRIST before: for "in a moment, in the twinkling of "an eye, at the laſt trump, the dead ſhall be raiſed "incorruptible," that is, with ſpiritual bodies

which

which will be no more liable to corruption; "and SERM. CLXXXIV.
"we," that is, thoſe that remain then alive, "ſhall alſo be changed." From all which it appears, that the meaning of this expreſſion, "thoſe "that ſleep in JESUS ſhall GOD bring with him," is this, that the LORD JESUS ſhall come "in "the clouds of heaven, in the glory of his FA-"THER," and by the ſound "of the trump of "GOD ſhall raiſe the dead in CHRIST." And our SAVIOUR tells us more particularly, that this ſhall be done by the miniſtry of angels, Matth. xxiv. 30, 31. "When the SON of man comes "with power and great glory, that the angels ſhall "with the great ſound of the trumpet, gather the "elect from the four winds;" and when they are thus gathered, "GOD ſhall bring them with him."

And here I cannot but obſerve, that the title of GOD is given to our SAVIOUR, who is to be judge of the world. "Them that ſleep in JESUS, "ſhall GOD bring with him." And elſewhere our apoſtle ſpeaking of this glorious appearance and coming of CHRIST to judgment, calls him "the "great GOD," Tit. ii. 13. "Looking for the bleſ-"ſed hope, and glorious appearance of the great "GOD and our SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST." Which cannot be underſtood of the appearance of two perſons, viz. GOD, the FATHER, and his SON JESUS CHRIST our SAVIOUR; for then the article would have been added to diſtinguiſh them, and it would not have been καὶ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν, but καὶ τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν, as if he had ſaid, "the "appearance of the great GOD, and of JESUS "CHRIST our SAVIOUR;" when as according to the propriety of the Greek, the article being want-

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ing, it ought to be render'd thus, "looking for "the appearing of JESUS CHRIST the great GOD "and our SAVIOUR." This is very much confirmed, in that the ſame apoſtle here in the text, ſpeaking of CHRIST's coming to judgment, calls him GOD; "them ſhall GOD bring with him."

The words thus explained, give us this obſervation; that it is a firm principle of the chriſtian religion, that thoſe who die in the faith of CHRIST, that is, in the ſtate of true chriſtianity, ſhall have a bleſſed reſurrection. "If we believe, ſaith the apo-"ſtle, that JESUS died, and roſe again; even ſo "them alſo that ſleep in him, ſhall GOD bring "with him." The apoſtle to the Hebrews reckons the reſurrection of the dead among "the principles "of the doctrine of CHRIST," Heb. vi. 2.

In ſpeaking to this obſervation, I ſhall do theſe three things:

Firſt, I ſhall ſhew what it is to die in the faith of CHRIST, or in the ſtate of a true chriſtian, which is here called, "ſleeping in JESUS."

Secondly, I ſhall ſhew how the death and reſurrection of CHRIST are an argument and proof of our reſurrection from the dead. And,

Thirdly, wherein the bleſſedneſs of the reſurrection of the juſt doth conſiſt.

Firſt, what it is to die in the faith of CHRIST, or in the ſtate of a true chriſtian, which is here call'd, "ſleeping in JESUS." And this imports one of theſe two things; either,

1. That we die in ſuch a belief of the doctrine of CHRIST, as hath been accompanied with a holy obedience of life, to the commands and precepts of the goſpel; that our profeſſion of the chriſtian religion

ligion hath evidenced itſelf in the virtues of a good life, in the conſtant courſe and tenor of an holy and unblameable converſation. This aſſurance the chriſtian religion gives us, that "if we have our fruit "unto holineſs, our end ſhall be everlaſting life."

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Or elſe, 2. that we exerciſe ſuch a ſincere and unfeigned repentance before death for the errors and miſcarriages of our lives, as produceth a firm purpoſe and reſolution of amending our lives, if GOD ſhould be pleaſed to prolong and continue them. For only ſuch a belief and profeſſion of the chriſtian religion, as produceth one of theſe effects, doth put us into a ſtate of grace, and give us hope of a bleſſed reſurrection to eternal life.

The firſt of theſe effects is much to be preferr'd, viz. the general courſe and tenor of a holy life; the latter being infinitely more hazardous, by reaſon of the deceitfulneſs of our hearts, and the infinite uncertainty of a death-bed repentance.

Secondly, I ſhall ſhew how the death and reſurrection of CHRIST are an argument and proof of our reſurrection from the dead. "If we be-"lieve," *&c.*

I ſhall ſhew by and by, how the reſurrection of CHRIST is an argument and proof of our reſurrection. But why is his death here mentioned as part of the argument? "If we believe that CHRIST "died." The reaſon is obvious: becauſe the truth of the miracle of his reſurrection depends upon the reality of his death; for if CHRIST was not really dead, then he could not riſe from the dead, and the pretence of his reſurrection was a deluſion and impoſture: but if he was really dead, and roſe again from the dead, then have we a firm ground for the belief

SERM. belief of a future reſurrection. Now this chri-
CLXXXIV. ſtians do believe, that CHRIST was really dead, and roſe again from the dead, and that upon very good grounds. We need not doubt but that the malice of the *Jews* took care to kill him; and the ſtory makes it evident, becauſe blood and water came out of his ſide, which is a certain proof that his heart was pierced; and it could not be a deliquium, or a fainting fit, becauſe after his blood was exhauſted, he could not naturally return to life again. But we need not contend much about this, ſince the heathens who are unconcern'd confeſs this. Tacitus, in the 15th book of his annals tells us, "that JESUS was put to death by crucifixion under Pontius Pilate." And Joſephus, who was a Jew both by his birth and religion, and lived preſently after our SAVIOUR's time, in the xviiith book of his Jewiſh antiquities tells us, "that "CHRIST was crucified, and that he appeared "to his followers the third day, riſen from the "dead."

Now this cannot in reaſon be ſaid to be done only in appearance, and to be a mere illuſion of men ſenſes, as ſome ancient hereticks pretended; becauſe that which may be an evaſion in any caſe, is to be admitted in none. For what greater evidence is poſſible of any one's riſing from the dead, than the circumſtances of our SAVIOUR's reſurrection? That there was a great earthquake, and that the ſtone was rolled away from the grave and the grave clothes found there, and his body gone; and that after this he appeared, and convers'd ſo often with ſo many, to whom he was well known when alive, and entertained long diſcourſes with them, and did

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eat and drink with them, and permit them to handle his body, and to put their fingers into the wound of his ſide; and all this exactly agreeing with his own prediction. So that if we believe the providence of GOD, we cannot think it to be ſo little vigilant, as that men after their utmoſt care, muſt neceſſarily be deluded in a matter of ſo great conſequence. SERM. CLXXXIV.

Now I ſhall ſhew, that the death and reſurrection of CHRIST is a very good argument of our reſurrection. 1 Cor. xv. 20. CHRIST is ſaid to be "riſen from the dead, and become the firſt-fruits "of them that ſlept." Not that he was the firſt that was raiſed from the dead; for Elijah and Eliſha raiſed ſome, and ſo did our SAVIOUR himſelf in his life-time: but the apoſtle here alludes to the firſt-fruits among the Jews, which were a pledge and an earneſt of a future harveſt. In like manner the reſurrection of CHRIST is call'd "the firſt-fruits of "them that ſlept," becauſe it is an earneſt of that general harveſt, which ſhould be at the end of the world, when "the angels, the reapers, ſhall come "to gather the elect from the four winds." But the reſurrection of others before CHRIST was no earneſt of this, becauſe they "were raiſed," but CHRIST is ſaid "to riſe from the dead by his "own power." And in this ſenſe he is truly ſaid by St. John, Rev. i. 5. to be "the firſt-begotten "from the dead." And this ſecures our reſurrection to eternal life; becauſe he who hath promiſed to raiſe us up, "did raiſe himſelf from the dead."

And that CHRIST intended to lay great ſtreſs upon this argument, appears in that he foretold it ſo often, as the great ſign that he would give to the Jews to convince their infidelity. John ii. 18, 19.

"The

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world "they neither marry, nor are given in mar-
"riage." And the reaſon of this is very obvious; becauſe the reaſon why men marry now, is becauſe they are mortal, and therefore to preſerve and propagate the kind, which would otherwiſe fail, marriage was inſtituted: but in the other world this reaſon will ceaſe; becauſe then men ſhall be immortal, and die no more. And therefore our SAVIOUR, after he had ſaid, "that at the re-
"ſurrection of the dead, men neither marry,
"nor are given in marriage," he immediately adds as the reaſon of it, "neither can they die
"any more, for they are equal unto the angels;" that is, they ſhall be like them in the immortal duration of their beings; "and are the children of
"GOD, being the children of the reſurrection." Good men are now "the children of GOD," becauſe they reſemble him in the holy diſpoſition of their minds: but then they ſhall be like him in the participation of his happineſs, ſo far as finite and created beings are capable; the whole man, the body as well as the ſoul, ſhall be partakers of immortality. And this is a glorious change, for a frail and mortal body, liable to pains, and diſeaſes, and death, to become immortal, and freed from all thoſe troubleſome accidents, to which they are now liable. The

Second text to this purpoſe is, Phil. iii. 20. "But
"our converſation is in heaven," ſays St. Paul, ſpeaking of true and ſincere chriſtians; "but our
"converſation is in heaven, from whence alſo we
"look for the SAVIOUR, the LORD JESUS
"CHRIST, who ſhall change our vile body, that
"it may be faſhioned like unto his glorious body,
"accord-

This very thing that CHRIST was dead, and lives again, makes him "the amen, the true and "faithful witneſs." I proceed to the SERM. CLXXXIV.

Third and laſt thing, viz. wherein the bleſſedneſs of the reſurrection of the juſt ſhall conſiſt; namely in theſe two things.

I. In the mighty change which ſhall be made in theſe vile and mortal bodies of ours, and the glorious qualities they ſhall then be inveſted withal. And,

II. In the conſequent happineſs of the whole man, of the ſoul and body united and purified.

I. In the mighty change which ſhall then be made in theſe vile and mortal bodies of ours, and the glorious qualities which they ſhall then be inveſted withal. But wherein this glory ſhall conſiſt, becauſe it is matter of pure revelation, we muſt wholly rely upon ſcripture for the particular account and explication of it. And there are three texts of ſcripture, wherein this glorious change which ſhall be made in our bodies at the reſurrection, is more particularly mentioned and deſcribed. The

Firſt is Luke xx. 35, 36. "But they who ſhall "be counted worthy to obtain that world, and the "reſurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are "given in marriage." This our SAVIOUR ſpeaks, becauſe that which occaſioned this diſcourſe concerning the reſurrection, was a queſtion moved by the Sadducees concerning a woman that had ſeven huſbands in her life time; upon which they captiouſly aſked our SAVIOUR, "whoſe wife of the ſeven "this woman ſhould be at the reſurrection?" To which our SAVIOUR anſwers, by taking away the foundation of it, telling them, that in the other world

SERM. CLXXXIV. "and with what bodies do they come?" This was the common objection which the infidels made againſt this article of the reſurrection: either men ſhall riſe with the ſame bodies which they had in this life; or they ſhall not. If with the ſame bodies which they had in this life, to what purpoſe will that be? ſince in the other world men ſhall not eat or drink, or propagate their kind, and conſequently have no uſe of ſuch a body as ours now is: but if it be not the ſame body, how then are mens bodies raiſed? To this queſtion, the apoſtle gives a clear anſwer; that the bodies of men which ſhall be raiſed, ſhall in ſome reſpect be the ſame, and in other reſpects not the ſame; the matter and ſubſtance of the body may ſtill be the ſame, and yet may undergo a mighty change, be faſhioned after another manner, and be endowed with quite other qualities than it had before. And this he illuſtrates by two inſtances.

1. By the difference between the corn which is ſown, and that which grows up. And,

2. By the difference of ſeveral ſorts of bodies, which are all made of the ſame kind of matter.

1. From the difference between the corn which is ſown, and that which is grown up, ver. 36, 37, 38. "Thou fool, that which thou ſoweſt is not quick-"ned, except it die," that is, unleſs it be firſt buried in the earth, and rot, and be corrupted there; "and that which thou ſoweſt, thou ſoweſt not that "body which ſhall be; but bare grain, as of wheat or "ſome other kind." "But bare grain," that is a naked grain, without either ſtalk, or blade, or ear: "but GOD giveth it a body, as it hath pleaſed "him;" that is, the author of nature makes it ſpring

ſpring up in a blade, which grows up into a ſtalk, which bears an ear that contains many grains of corn; "and to every ſeed his own body," that is, a body of the ſame kind with the ſeed that was ſown. SERM. CLXXXIV.

2. The other inſtance is from the difference of ſeveral ſorts of bodies, which are all made of the ſame kind of matter, put into different forms, ſome more perfect and glorious, and others leſs: ver. 39, 40, 41. "All fleſh is not the ſame fleſh; but there is "one fleſh of men, another of beaſts, another of "fiſhes, and another of birds;" and yet all theſe are faſhioned out of the ſame kind of matter. "There are alſo celeſtial bodies, and bodies terreſtri-"al; but the glory of the celeſtial is one, and the "glory of the terreſtrial is another;" and the celeſtial bodies are of a different luſtre and glory; "for there is one glory of the ſun, and another "glory of the moon, and another glory of the ſtars, "and one ſtar differeth from another ſtar in glory."

And then he applies theſe inſtances to the reſurrection, ver. 42. "So alſo is it in the reſurrection "of the dead." The matter which was vile before, when it was buried in the earth, puts on another form, and by the power of GOD is raiſed up a different thing, and far more glorious than when it was put into the earth: ver. 42, 43, 44. "It is "ſown in corruption, it is raiſed in incorruption; "it is ſown in diſhonour, it is raiſed in glory; it is "ſown in weakneſs, it is raiſed in power; it is "ſown a natural (or an animal) body, it is raiſed a "ſpiritual body." I ſhall briefly explain theſe ſeveral expreſſions which repreſent to us the difference between our bodies as they now are, and as they ſhall be at the reſurrection.

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" It is ſown in corruption, it is raiſed in incor-
" ruption." Our bodies, as they are now, are unequally tempered, and in a perpetual flux and change, continually tending to corruption, being made of ſuch contrary principles and qualities, as by their perpetual conflict do conſpire the ruin and diſſolution of it. But when they are raiſed again, they ſhall be ſo tempered and refined as to be free from all theſe deſtructive qualities which threaten a change and diſſolution; " they ſhall be raiſed incorruptible," ſo as not to be liable to decay and death. The body, though it continues ſtill material and conſiſts of matter, ſhall then partake of the immortality of the ſoul to which it is united, and be of equal duration with it. So the apoſtle tells us, ver. 52, 53. " The dead ſhall be raiſed incorruptible; for this " corruptible muſt put on incorruption, and this " mortal muſt put on immortality."

" It is ſown in diſhonour, it is raiſed in glory." Our bodies, when they are committed to the earth, are vile offenſive carcaſes, and therefore we hide and bury them out of ſight: but they ſhall be raiſed beautiful and glorious, as different from what they were before, as the heavenly manſions, in which they are to dwell for ever, are from that dark cell of the grave, out of which they are raiſed; and they that before were only fit company for duſt and worms, ſhall be admitted into the reviving preſence of GOD, and the bleſſed ſociety of angels.

" It is ſown in weakneſs, it ſhall be raiſed in power." Our bodies now fall to the ground through their own frailty, and drop into the grave through the weakneſs and infirmity of nature to ſupport and bear them up any longer: but though they fall through weak

weakneſs, they ſhall at the reſurrection be endowed with ſuch a life, and ſtrength and vigour, as to be able, without any change or decay to abide and continue for ever in the ſame ſtate. SERM. CLXXXIV.

" It is ſown a natural body, ψυχικὸν, an animal " body," an earthly cottage or tabernacle fitted for the ſoul to lodge in for a little while; " but it is " raiſed a ſpiritual body." And this is the ſum of all the reſt. Our bodies in this world are groſs fleſh and blood, liable to be affected with natural and ſenſual pleaſures, and to be afflicted with natural pains and diſeaſes, to be preſſed with natural neceſſities of hunger and thirſt, and obnoxious to all thoſe changes and accidents to which natural things are ſubject: " but it ſhall be raiſed a ſpiritual body," pure and refined from the dregs of matter; it ſhall not hunger nor thirſt, be diſeaſed or in pain any more. Theſe " houſes of clay, whoſe foundation is in the " duſt," are continually decaying, and therefore they ſtand in need of perpetual reparation by food and phyſick: but " our houſe which ſhall be from " heaven," ſhall be of ſuch laſting and durable matter, as not only time, but even eternity itſelf ſhall make no impreſſion upon it, or cauſe the leaſt decay in it. " They who ſhall be accounted " worthy," ſays our SAVIOUR, " to obtain " that world, and the reſurrection from the dead, " cannot die any more, but ſhall be like the an- " gels, and are the children of GOD;" that is, in ſome degree ſhall partake of the felicity and immortality of GOD himſelf, who is " always the ſame, " and his years fail not." " It is raiſed a ſpiritual " body." We ſhall then be as it were all ſpirit, and our very bodies ſhall be then ſo raiſed and refined,

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fined, that they ſhall be no clog, no impediment to the operations of our ſouls. And ſurely we cannot but think this a glorious change, when we conſider how our bodies do now cruſh our ſpirits, and what a melancholy and dead weight they are upon them, and how grievous an incumbrance, and trouble and temptation they are for the moſt part to us in this mortal ſtate. I proceed now to the

IId thing, wherein the bleſſedneſs of the juſt at the reſurrection ſhall conſiſt, viz. in the conſequent happineſs of the whole man, of the ſoul and body united and purified, the one from ſin, the other from frailty and corruption; and both admitted to the bleſſed ſight and enjoyment of the ever bleſſed GOD. But this is an argument too big for our narrow apprehenſions of things, whilſt we are in this mortal ſtate; a ſubject too unwieldy for ſuch children, as the wiſeſt of us all are while we are in this world; and whenever we attempt to ſpeak of it, we do but "ſpeak "like children, and underſtand like children," and reaſon like children about it. "That which is im-"perfect muſt be done away;" our ſouls muſt be raiſed to a greater perfection, and our underſtandings filled with a ſtronger and ſteadier light before we can be fit to handle ſuch a ſubject, according to the worth and dignity of it. We muſt firſt have been in heaven, and poſſeſſed of that felicity and glory which is there to be enjoyed, before we can think or talk of it in any meaſure as it deſerves. In the mean time, whenever we ſet about it we ſhall find our faculties oppreſſed with the weight and ſplendor of ſo vaſt and glorious an argument; like St. Paul, who when he was caught up into paradiſe, ſaw and heard that, which when he came down into this

world again, he was not able to expreſs, and which is not poſſible for man to utter.

So that in diſcourſing of the ſtate of the bleſſed, we muſt content ourſelves with what the ſcripture hath declared in general concerning it, that it is a ſtate of perfect freedom from all thoſe infirmities and imperfections, thoſe evils and miſeries, thoſe ſins and temptations to which we are liable in this world; a ſtate of unſpeakable and endleſs joy and happineſs in the bleſſed ſight and preſence of GOD, and in the happy ſociety of "an innumerable company "of angels," and of "the ſpirits of juſt men made "perfect."

So St. John deſcribes the felicities and glories of that ſtate, as they were repreſented to him in a viſion, Rev. xxi. 2, 3, 4. "And I John ſaw the "holy city, new Jeruſalem, coming down from GOD "out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her "huſband. And I heard a great voice out of hea-"ven, ſaying, behold, the tabernacle of GOD is "with men, and he will dwell with them, and they "ſhall be his people, and GOD himſelf ſhall be with "them, and be their GOD. And GOD ſhall wipe "away all tears from their eyes: and there ſhall be "no more death, neither ſorrow, nor crying, neither "ſhall there be any more pain; for the former "things are paſſed away;" that is, all thoſe evils which we ſaw and ſuffered in this world, will for ever vaniſh and diſappear. And ver 23. "And "the city had no need of the ſun, neither of the "moon to ſhine in it: for the glory of GOD did "lighten it, and the lamb is the light thereof." And which is the greateſt privilege and felicity of all, no ſin ſhall be there; ver. 27. "And there "ſhall

SERM. CLXXXIV. "ſhall in no wiſe enter into it any thing that defileth," and conſequently no miſery and curſe ſhall be there: chap. xxii. 3, 4. "And there ſhall be no more "curſe; but the throne of GOD, and of the lamb "ſhall be in it, and his ſervants ſhall ſerve him, "and they ſhall ſee his face." In which laſt words, our employment and our happineſs are expreſſed; but what in particular theſe ſhall be, and wherein they ſhall conſiſt, it is impoſſible for us now to deſcribe; it is ſufficient to know in general, that our employment ſhall be our unſpeakable pleaſure, and every way ſuitable to the glory and happineſs of that ſtate, and as much above the nobleſt and moſt delightful employment of this world, as the perfection of our bodies, and the powers of our ſouls ſhall then be above what they were in this world.

In a word, our happineſs ſhall be ſuch as is worthy of the great king of the world to beſtow upon his faithful ſervants, and infinitely beyond the juſt reward of their beſt ſervices; it is "to ſee GOD, and "to be ever with him, in whoſe preſence is fulneſs "of joy, and at whoſe right-hand are pleaſures for "evermore."

SER-

# SERMON CLXXXV.

## Of the happineſs of good men, in the future ſtate.

1 JOHN iii. 2.

*It doth not yet appear what we ſhall be; but we know, that when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him; for we ſhall ſee him as he is.*

SERM. CLXXXV. The firſt ſermon on this text.

THE great deſign of this epiſtle is to perſuade men to purity and holineſs of life, without which we can lay no claim to the promiſes and privileges of the goſpel. Chriſtians are called "the children of GOD;" and this is a great privilege indeed, a mighty argument of GOD's love and favour to us, to own us for his children. "Behold what manner of love the FATHER has "beſtowed upon us, that we ſhould be called the "ſons of GOD." This is the happineſs of our preſent condition: "now we are the ſons of GOD; "and if ſons, then heirs;" this gives a title to a future inheritance. "And it does not yet appear "what we ſhall be;" the circumſtances of our future happineſs and glory are not perfectly revealed to us, only thus much in general is diſcovered to us, that we ſhall be very happy, becauſe we ſhall be admitted to the immediate ſight and enjoyment of GOD; and we cannot ſee him and enjoy him, unleſs we be like him; and to be like GOD, is to be happy. "We know that when he ſhall appear, ἐὰν φανερωθῇ, that is, when it ſhall appear. It doth not yet

SERM. CLXXXV. " appear what we ſhall be, but when it ſhall ap-
" pear," that is, when our future happineſs ſhall be revealed to us: it is not yet particularly diſcovered to us, but thus much in general we know of it beforehand, that " we ſhall be like GOD, for we ſhall " ſee him as he is." In which words there are theſe four things worthy of our conſideration.

Firſt, the preſent obſcurity of our future ſtate, as to the particular circumſtances of that happineſs which good men ſhall enjoy in another world; " it doth " not yet appear what we ſhall be."

Secondly, that thus much we certainly know of it in general, that it ſhall conſiſt in the ſight and enjoyment of GOD; " we know that when it ſhall " appear, we ſhall ſee him as he is."

Thirdly, wherein our likeneſs to GOD ſhall conſiſt: " we ſhall be like him."

Fourthly, the neceſſary connexion between our likeneſs to GOD, and our ſight and enjoyment of him: " we ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him " as he is;" that is, becauſe " we ſhall ſee him as " he is," therefore it is certain " we ſhall be like " him;" for unleſs we be like GOD, we are not capable of ſeeing and enjoying him.

Firſt, the preſent obſcurity of our future ſtate, as to the particular circumſtances of that happineſs which good men ſhall enjoy in another world: " it " doth not yet appear what we ſhall be." The ſcripture tells us, that it is " a glory yet to be re-
" vealed:" that there ſhall be ſuch a ſtate of happineſs for good men in another world, though it was in a great meaſure obſcure to the world before, both to Jews and Gentiles, yet it is now clearly revealed to us by " the appearance of JESUS
" CHRIST,

" CHRIST, who hath brought life and immorta- SERM.
" lity to light by the goſpel." But the particular CLXXXV.
circumſtances of this happineſs are ſtill hid from us; and as it is a needleſs, ſo it would be a faulty curioſity in us to pry and enquire into them. It is enough that we certainly know there is ſuch a ſtate; the knowledge of this in general is enough to quicken our diligence, and excite our endeavours for the obtaining and ſecuring of it: it is enough to mortify all evil affections in us, and to baffle all temptations to ſin, to know that it will rob us of ſo great a felicity, as GOD hath promiſed to us; it is enough to ſupport and comfort us under all the miſeries and afflictions of this preſent time, to be fully aſſured that after a few days of ſorrow and trouble are over, we ſhall be unſpeakably and eternally happy. A firm perſuaſion of this, is argument enough to our obedience, and a ſufficient ſupport to our faith and patience, and we need enquire no farther. Thus much GOD hath revealed to us for our comfort and encouragement, the reſt he hath conceal'd from us; and it would be a bold intruſion into his ſecrets, to pry and ſearch any farther; and if we ſhould, it would be to no purpoſe. For in things which depend upon divine revelation it is impoſſible for us to know any more, than GOD is pleaſed to reveal to us. In matters of pure revelation, we cannot go beyond the word of the LORD; " the things of GOD knoweth no man, but the " SPIRIT of GOD" or he to whom the SPIRIT of GOD ſhall reveal them. If one ſhould come from a ſtrange country, never known and diſcover'd before, and ſhould only tell us in general, that it was a moſt pleaſant and delightful place, and the inhabi-

tants

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tants a brave, and generous, and wealthy people, under the government of a wiſe and great king, ruling by excellent laws; and that the particular delights and advantages of it were not to be imagined by any thing he knew in our own country, and ſhould ſay no more of it: if we gave credit to the perſon that brought this relation, it would create in us a great admiration of the country deſcribed to us, and a mighty concern to ſee it and live in it: but it would be a vain curioſity to reaſon and conjecture about the particular conveniencies of it; becauſe it would be impoſſible, by any diſcourſe, to arrive at the certain knowledge of any more, than he who only knew it was pleaſed to tell us. This is the caſe as to our heavenly country. Our bleſſed SAVIOUR, who "came down from heaven, from "the boſom of his FATHER," hath revealed to us a ſtate of happineſs and glory in general, that there is ſuch "a kingdom prepared for us;" and when he was leaving the world he told us, that he was going thither by the way of the grave; and when he was riſen again from the dead, and was aſcended into heaven, he promiſed to come again at the end of the world, and to raiſe us out of the grave, and to carry us into thoſe celeſtial manſions, where "we ſhall be for ever with "the LORD." And beyond this he hath made no particular diſcovery to us of the felicity of that place, he hath given us no punctual repreſentation of the glory of it; he hath not declared to us in a ſpecial manner, what our work and employment ſhall be, in what way GOD will communicate himſelf to us, nor what kind of converſation we ſhall have with the bleſſed angels, and with one another, and how

r we ſhall know, or be known to one ano- SERM.
r whether we ſhall ſtand affected in any pecu- CLXXXV.
nner to thoſe who were our friends and rela-
and acquaintance in this world. Theſe, and
a thouſand things more which may concern
ries of that ſtate, and the happineſs and em-
nt of "the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect,"
VIOUR hath told us nothing of, but only
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ke a conjecture of the deſigns and reaſonings
iſe man; not only becauſe it would be of
t uſe to us, but becauſe the imperfection of
nature, and of our faculties in this ſtate of
ty, is not able to bear a full and clear repre-
n of ſo great a glory.

n our SAVIOUR was transfigured upon
unt, and a little image of heaven was ſhewn
, the diſciples were ſtrangely amazed, and
ot what they ſaid. And St. Paul tells us,
en he was "taken up into the third heaven,"
gs which he ſaw and heard there, were "not
utter'd." So that well might the apoſtle ſay
the text, "it doth not yet appear what we
be." Our future ſtate is very obſcure to us
e are in this world, as to any diſtinct and par-
knowledge of it.

e are a ſort of idle men in the world, I mean
olmen, who have been very buſy and bold in
quiries, very peremptory in their determina-
ſeveral things relating to it: but after all
ch and ſtudy, it is impoſſible for us to advance
farther in the knowledge of it, than GOD
en pleaſed in his holy word to reveal it to us.

And

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And how much GOD hath revealed, I ſhall in diſcourſing of the

Second particular conſider; namely, that thus much we know of it in general, that it ſhall conſiſt in the bleſſed viſion of GOD. "It doth not yet "appear what we ſhall be; but when he ſhall ap- "pear, we ſhall ſee him as he is." Thus much all chriſtians knew, becauſe our SAVIOUR hath plainly revealed it to them, that the bleſſedneſs of the ſaints ſhould conſiſt in the viſion of GOD. Matth. v. 8. "Bleſſed are the pure in heart for they ſhall ſee "GOD." Which the apoſtle expreſſeth with a little variation, Heb. xii. 14, "Without holineſs no "man ſhall ſee the LORD." Here is a great thing expreſt to us in a few words, "we ſhall ſee him as "he is;" for the better underſtanding of which, it will be convenient to enquire into theſe three things,

I. What is meant here by "ſeeing GOD."

II. What by "ſeeing him as he is."

III. The fitneſs of this metaphor to expreſs to us the happineſs of our future ſtate.

I. What is meant by "ſeeing GOD." The ſchoolmen have ſpun out abundance of fine cobwebs about this, which in their language they call "the beati- "fick viſion of GOD," and they generally deſcribe and explain it ſo as to render it a very dry and ſapleſs thing. They make it to conſiſt in a perpetual gazing upon GOD, and contemplating the divine eſſence and perfections, in which as in a clearer mirrour, they ſuppoſe men to ſee and know all other things. But this is a very jejune and inſipid notion of happineſs, but yet ſuitable enough to the guſt and inclination of thoſe that deviſed it. And indeed men are naturally apt to form ſuch notions of GOD

and

and heaven to themſelves, as are moſt agreeable to their own appetites and inclinations. So the heathen world framed to themſelves gods after their own image and likeneſs, of like paſſions and inclinations, and luſts with themſelves; and ſuch a heaven as pleas'd themſelves. and was moſt ſuitable to their own groſs imaginations of pleaſure and happineſs; and therefore they deſcribed it by pleaſant fields, and clear rivers, and ſhady walks. So likewiſe Mahomet framed ſuch a paradiſe, as is moſt agreeable to our ſenſual appetites and luſts. In like manner the ſchoolmen, who addicted themſelves wholly to contemplation, would have the happineſs of heaven to conſiſt in that which they themſelves took moſt delight in. But ſurely the ſcripture underſtands ſomething more "by the ſight of GOD," than a bare contemplation of him. It is a known rule given by divines for the underſtanding of ſcripture; "the words that ſignify ſenſe and knowledge, are "very often in ſcripture to be ſo underſtood, as to "comprehend in them thoſe affections and effects, "which ſenſe and knowledge are apt to produce in "us." So our knowledge of GOD doth in ſcripture many times import the ſum of all religion, the whole duty of man, "he that ſaith I know him, and keep-"eth not his commandments, is a liar:" and GOD's knowing of us, ſignifies the whole happineſs of man. "The LORD knoweth them that are his." So taſting and ſight are in ſcripture put for experience and enjoyment, Pſal. xxxiv. 8. "Taſte and "ſee that the LORD is gracious." Lament. iii. 1. "I am the man that have ſeen affliction," that is, "that have ſuffered it." 1 Pet. iii. 10. "He that "will love life, and ſee good days," that is, "en-"joy

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" joy them." And ſo we uſe the word in common ſpeech. To ſee a friend, is to enjoy the pleaſure of his company, and all the advantages of his converſation. So here " the ſight of GOD" doth comprehend and take in all the happineſs of a future ſtate. And to ſee the king, includes the court, and all the glorious circumſtances of his attendance; ſo " to ſee GOD," does take in all that glory and joy and happineſs which flows from his preſence.

I grant indeed, that this expreſſion primarily and immediately denotes our perfect knowledge of GOD in the other life, in oppoſition to thoſe obſcure and more imperfect diſcoveries and apprehenſions which we have of him in theſe earthly bodies: for I think we need make no doubt, but that ſight is here taken in a ſpiritual and intellectual ſenſe. We are not to dream that we ſhall ſee GOD with our bodily eyes; for being a pure ſpirit, he cannot be the object of any corporeal ſenſe. But we ſhall have ſuch a ſight of him, as a pure ſpirit is capable of; we ſhall ſee him with the eyes of our minds and underſtanding. And in this ſenſe, we do in ſome degree " ſee " GOD" in this life, by faith and knowledge: but it is but " darkly" and as it were " through a " glaſs" that we ſee him, as the apoſtle expreſſeth it. But when we come to heaven, our underſtandings ſhall be raiſed and cleared to ſuch a degree of ſtrength and perfection, that we ſhall know GOD after a far more perfect manner, than we are capable of in this ſtate of mortality. And this perfect knowledge of him, together with the happy effects of it, thoſe affections which it ſhall raiſe in us, and that bleſſed enjoyment of the chief good which we are not able to expreſs, is that which is call'd the " ſight of GOD."

II. What

II. What is here meant by "ſeeing GOD as he "is: we ſhall ſee him as he is." Now this doth farther and emphatically expreſs our perfect knowledge and enjoyment of GOD. SERM. CLXXXV.

1. Our perfect knowledge of him. Not that we are to imagine, that when we come to heaven, our underſtanding can, or ſhall be raiſed to ſuch a pitch, as to be able perfectly to comprehend the infinite nature and perfections of GOD: for all created underſtanding being naturally finite, we cannot imagine that it can be ſtretched to the comprehenſion of what is infinite, as the divine nature and perfections are. But our knowledge ſhall be advanced and raiſed to ſuch degrees of perfection, as a finite and created underſtanding is capable of.

And we may very reaſonably conceive, (and indeed the ſcripture leads us to it, without and beyond which, it is not ſafe to ſpeak of theſe things) I ſay, we may reaſonably conceive the perfection of this knowledge to conſiſt in theſe three things: in a more immediate, and clear, and certain knowledge of the divine nature and perfections, than we are capable of in this ſtate of mortality.

(1.) We ſhall then have an immediate knowledge of GOD. In this world we ſee him by the means and help of his word and works; we ſee him as he hath manifeſted and revealed himſelf to us in the holy ſcriptures, as he hath repreſented himſelf to us in the creatures, as the apoſtle tells us, Rom. i. 20. "That his eternal power and godhead are clearly "ſeen by the things that are made." But thus we do not ſee GOD immediately and directly; but by a reflexion of his perfections from the works of creation and providence. We ſee him by faith at

SERM. CLXXXV. a great diſtance, which the apoſtle calls "ſeeing "him" as it were "through a glaſs," 1 Cor. xiii. 12. Now faith in ſcripture is moſt frequently oppoſed to ſight, which is a more immediate view and nearer diſcovery of a thing, 2 Cor. v. 7. "We walk "by faith, and not by ſight." But in heaven we ſhall have an immediate and direct ſight of GOD, that which the ſcripture calls "ſeeing him face to "face;" not at a diſtance, as we do now by faith; not by reflexion, as we do now ſee him in the creatures; but we ſhall have an immediate and direct view of him. "Faith ſhall then ceaſe," as the apoſtle tells us, and be perfected in ſight, becauſe of the nearneſs and evidence of the object.

(2.) We ſhall not only then have an immediate, but a far clearer knowledge of GOD, than we have now in this life, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. "We now ſee "him in a glaſs darkly, ἐν αἰνίγματι, in a riddle," which is an obſcure and involved declaration of a thing. We have now but very dark and confuſed apprehenſions, and ſuch as do not only repreſent him very imperfectly, but many times very falſly to us. While our ſouls are muffled in theſe groſs bodies, we are compaſs'd about with clouds, which do in a great meaſure intercept the ſight of him: but the light of glory will ſcatter all theſe clouds, "the "vail ſhall then be taken away." The reſurrection will refine our bodies to that purity, that they ſhall be fit inſtruments for our ſouls. We ſhall have ſpiritual bodies, as the apoſtle tells us, 1 Cor. xv. ſo purified from all theſe dregs which now incumber them, that they ſhall be fit to be united to a ſpirit, and to act with it; and then "we ſhall "with open face behold the glory of GOD," as the

the apoſtle expreſſeth it, 2 Cor. iii. 18. or as it is here in the text, "we ſhall ſee him as he is." We ſee him now many times "as he is not;" that is, we are liable to falſe and miſtaken conceptions of him: but then "we ſhall ſee him as he is." The clearneſs of our knowledge will free us from all error and miſtake about him. We are now many times at a loſs, what conceptions to have of GOD; we are hard put to it to reconcile one perfection of GOD with another, and to make them conſiſtent and agree together. We believe his providence; but we are puzzled many times how to make that accord with his goodneſs and juſtice: but in heaven we ſhall ſee the harmony of all theſe, and that it was nothing but our ignorance and darkneſs, which made us imagine any diſcord and diſagreement in them. SERM. CLXXXV.

(3.) We ſhall then likewiſe have a certain knowledge of GOD, free from all doubts concerning him. There may be a certainty in faith; but not that high degree of evidence and aſſurance which is in ſight. 'Tis ſpoken by way of abating the certainty of faith, when it is called "the evidence of things "not ſeen." Nay, many times the faith of good men is mixed with a great deal of fear and doubt of the contrary. But in the ſtate of glory, we ſhall not be liable to any of theſe doubtings and jealouſies, which do ſo frequently poſſeſs the beſt of men in this world. Then "we ſhall know, as alſo we "are known," as the apoſtle expreſſeth it, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. As GOD now knows us, ſo ſhall we then know him, as to the truth and certainty of our knowledge.

Now ſuch an immediate, and clear, and certain knowledge of GOD, as hath been deſcribed, doth

SERM. CLXXXV. neceſſarily ſuppoſe a very great elevation of our underſtandings, above what this ſtate of mortality can bear. We cannot now have a clear and immediate ſight of GOD, becauſe the weakneſs and imperfection of our preſent ſtate will not admit of it. In this life, our underſtandings are eaſily over-borne by the luſtre and excellency of an object. Hence it was that GOD ſaid to Moſes, when he ſo earneſtly deſired to ſee his face, "thou canſt not ſee my face "and live," Exod. xxxiii. 20. So tranſcendent and glorious a ſight would quite overwhelm and overcome our faculties; as the light of the ſun, if we look ſtedfaſtly and directly upon it, will dazzle and blind the ſtrongeſt eye. The ſight of ſo glorious a being as GOD is, of ſo much excellency and happineſs, and perfection, as concenter in him, would fill us with joy and wonder, too great for frail mortality to bear: but in the ſtate of glory, the eye of the ſoul, that is, our underſtanding faculty ſhall be enlarged unto that capacity, and purified to that clearneſs, and elevated to that ſtrength, as to be able to receive and bear ſo much of the luſtre and glory of the divine nature and perfection, as is conſiſtent with the finiteneſs of a humane underſtanding, and ſuitable to the perfection of a glorified ſoul; and our underſtandings ſhall then be raiſed and advanced to ſuch a ſtrength, that they ſhall be ſo far from being oppreſſed and burdened with the preſence of GOD, and from ſinking under the weight of his glory, that they ſhall be infinitely raviſhed and delighted with it.

2. "To ſee GOD as he is," does imply our perfect enjoyment of him. We ſhall not only perfectly know him, but we ſhall take infinite pleaſure in

him, in beholding his glory, in praiſing and admiring his goodneſs, in doing his will with all imaginable readineſs and chearfulneſs. I do not pretend to deſcribe to you the particularities of that ſtate, and all the bleſſed comforts and enjoyments of it; "it doth not yet appear what we ſhall be." GOD hath not told us, and none but he, who is the author and fountain of this happineſs, can diſcover it to us. Let it ſuffice us, that GOD hath aſſured us of it, and hath prepared it for us; and it can be no mean thing which the infinite wiſdom, and goodneſs, and power of GOD hath deſigned for the final reward of thoſe who love him, and of thoſe whom he loves. If we know thus much of it, that it is certain beyond all doubt, and vaſt beyond all imagination, we have nothing more to wiſh, but that GOD would fit us for it, and as ſoon as he pleaſeth, bring us to the enjoyment of it. SERM. CLXXXV.

III. We will conſider the fitneſs of this metaphor, to expreſs to us the happineſs of our future ſtate. And that the ſcripture doth very much delight to ſet forth to us the bleſſedneſs of heaven, by this metaphor of "ſeeing," it is evident from the frequent uſe of it in ſcripture, Matth. v. 8. "Bleſſed are the "pure in heart; for they ſhall ſee GOD." 1 Cor. xiii. 12. "We ſhall ſee him face to face." Heb. xii. 14. "Without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the "LORD." And here in the text, "we ſhall ſee "him as he is." And indeed GOD is pleaſed, in ſcripture, to make ſenſible deſcriptions of the happineſs and miſery of another world, and by way of accommodation to our underſtandings, and condeſcenſion to the weakneſs and imperfections of this ſtate, to ſet forth heaven and hell to us by ſuch things as

SERM. CLXXXV. are ſenſible, and that not only to help our underſtandings to a more eaſy conception of things, but likewiſe to move and rouſe our affections, which while we are in the body, and immerſed in ſenſe, are commonly moſt powerfully wrought upon, by ſenſible repreſentations of things. And therefore hell is deſcribed to us by ſuch things as affect the ſenſe of feeling, becauſe that is capable of the greateſt and ſharpeſt pain; and the enjoyments of heaven by the ſenſe of ſight, becauſe that is the nobleſt of all our ſenſes; and the primary and proper object of it is moſt delightful, and of the moſt ſpiritual nature of any corporeal thing.

1. Sight is the nobleſt and moſt excellent of all our ſenſes: and therefore the frame of the eye is the moſt curious of all other parts of the body, and the deareſt to us, and that which we preſerve with the greateſt tenderneſs. When the apoſtle would ſet forth the mighty affection which the Galatians bore to him, he ſays, "they would have plucked out their "very eyes for him." 'Tis the moſt comprehenſive ſenſe, hath the largeſt ſphere, takes in the moſt objects, and diſcerns them at the greateſt diſtance. It can in a moment paſs from earth to heaven, and ſurvey innumerable objects. It is the moſt pure and ſpiritual, and quickeſt in its operations, and approacheth neareſt to the nature of a ſpiritual faculty. Of all our ſenſes, it carries the greateſt evidence and certainty along with it, and the reports of it are the moſt certain and unqueſtionable. Hence we uſe to ſay, that one eye-witneſs is more than ten ear-witneſſes. When Job would expreſs to us the moſt perfect knowledge of GOD, he does it by ſight, Job xlii. 5. "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the

" ear; but now my eye ſees thee:" that is, he had a more perfect and clear diſcovery of GOD and his perfections, than ever he had before. And to mention but one thing more; it is that ſenſe which is more apt to work upon our affections. SERM. CLXXXV.

*Segniùs irritant animos demiſſa per aures,*
*Quàm quæ ſunt oculis commiſſa fidelibus;*

" The things which we hear reported, are not ſo " apt to move our pity, or anger, or love, as the " things which we ſee with our eyes." So that in all theſe reſpects, of the dignity and excellency, the largeneſs and comprehenſiveneſs, the ſpirituality and quickneſs, the evidence and certainty of this ſenſe, and the power it hath to raiſe our affections, it is the fitteſt to repreſent to us the nobleſt employment and operation of our ſouls in the ſtate of glory.

2. The primary and proper object of this ſenſe, is the moſt delightful, and of the moſt ſpiritual nature of any corporeal thing, and that is light. " The " light of the eye rejoiceth the heart," Prov. xv. 30. " Light is ſweet, and a pleaſant thing it is for the " eye to behold the ſun," Eccleſ. xi. 7. It is the pureſt and moſt ſpiritual of all corporeal things, and therefore GOD chooſeth to repreſent himſelf by it. " GOD is light, and in him is no darkneſs at all."

And thus I have done with the ſecond thing I propounded to ſpeak to; namely, that thus much in general we certainly know of the happineſs of our future ſtate, that it ſhall conſiſt in " the ſight of " GOD." I ſhould now proceed to the third thing, namely, wherein our likeneſs to GOD ſhall conſiſt: but this I ſhall refer to another opportunity.

# SERMON CLXXXVI.

## Of the happineſs of good men, in the future ſtate.

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1 JOHN iii. 2.

*It doth not yet appear what we ſhall be; but we know, that when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him; for we ſhall ſee him as he is.*

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The ſecond ſermon on this text.

IN theſe words are four things worthy of our conſideration.

Firſt, the preſent obſcurity of our future ſtate, as to the particular circumſtances of that happineſs which good men ſhall enjoy in another world. "It "doth not yet appear what we ſhall be."

Secondly, what we know of it in general; that it ſhall conſiſt in the perfect knowledge and enjoyment of GOD; both which are comprehended in that expreſſion, "We ſhall ſee him as he is."

Thirdly, wherein our likeneſs and conformity to GOD ſhall conſiſt. "This we know, that when "he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him."

Fourthly, the neceſſary connexion between our likeneſs and conformity to GOD, and our ſight and enjoyment of him. The two firſt of theſe I have ſpoken to. I ſhall now proceed to the

Third, namely, wherein our likeneſs and conformity to GOD ſhall conſiſt. "We know that when "he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him." In theſe

two

vo things, in the immortality of our nature, and in SERM. CLXXXVI.
ıe purity of our ſouls.

I. In the immortality of our nature. In this ıortal ſtate, we are not capable of that happineſs hich conſiſts in the viſion of GOD, that is, in the rfect knowledge, and perpetual enjoyment of him. he imperfection of our ſtate, and the weakneſs of ır faculties, cannot bear the ſight of ſo glorious and ſplendent an object, as the divine nature and perctions are: "we cannot ſee GOD and live." The ility of our mortal condition is unequal to ſuſtain great a weight of glory; to be ſure it is incapae of eternal felicity: nothing but an immortal naıre can be happy for ever. And therefore the ipture tells us, that when our bodies ſhall be raiſed, : quality and condition of them ſhall be quite alred, and that our bleſſed SAVIOUR ſhall by his nighty power make a mighty change in them, ım what they were in this mortal ſtate, Phil. iii. 20, . "Our converſation is in heaven, from whence alſo we look for a SAVIOUR, the LORD JEsus CHRIST; who ſhall change our vile body, that it may be faſhioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to ſubdue all things to himſelf." And : apoſtle tells us more particularly, wherein this ınge doth conſiſt, 1 Cor. xv. 42. "It is ſown in corruption, it is raiſed in incorruption; it is ſown in diſhonour, it is raiſed in glory; it is ſown in weakneſs, it is raiſed in power; it is ſown a natural body, it is raiſed a ſpiritual body." Theſe ruptible, and vile, and weak, and groſs bodies, ich we wear and carry about us for a while, l at laſt put off, and lay down in the grave,

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ſhall by the power of GOD at the reſurrection, be refined and advanced into ſpiritual and vigorous, glorious and immortal bodies. Our bodies are now but a tabernacle, a temporary and moveable dwelling that ſhall ſhortly be taken down; but at the reſurrection, they ſhall become a fixed and ſettled habitation, a houſe that ſhall never decay, nor come to ruin. So the apoſtle tells us, 2 Cor. v. 1. "We "know that if our earthly houſe of this tabernacle "were diſſolved, we have a building of GOD, a "houſe not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." And when this bleſſed change ſhall be made, "mor-"tality ſhall be ſwallowed up of life; for this cor-"ruptible muſt put on incorruption, and this mor-"tal muſt put on immortality." And there is a neceſſity of this, in order to our perfect happineſs. For that is not a perfect happineſs, which ſhall expire and have an end, which it muſt have, if we were ſtill liable to mortality. And therefore the apoſtle is peremptory, that there muſt be ſuch a change, becauſe our bodies, as they are now conſtituted and framed, are utterly incapable of the happineſs of the next life. Ver. 50. "Now this I ſay, brethren, "that fleſh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom "of GOD." Where by fleſh and blood, the apoſtle does not mean, as many have imagined, our ſinful and impure nature; but our frail and mortal nature, conſiſting of ſuch groſs materials as fleſh and blood are, for the maintenance and ſupport of which, there is continual need of new recruits, and freſh ſupplies of nouriſhment by meat and drink. Such a nature as this, which is neceſſarily mortal, "can-"not inherit the kingdom of GOD," which is a ſtate of perpetual and endleſs happineſs. And that

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poſtle means this by the phraſe of " fleſh
d blood," is evident beyond all doubt, from
ext words, which he adds by way of ex-
tion of what he had ſaid, " this, I ſay, bre-
ren, fleſh and blood cannot inherit the king-
m of GOD; neither doth corruption inherit
corruption." That which is liable to death and
ption, is not capable of immortal glory and
ineſs. And therefore our nature muſt be made
ortal; and immortality makes us like to GOD,
s an evident teſtimony and declaration that we
' the ſons of GOD. We are now the children
GOD," in reſpect of our title to a future in-
ance; but this is hid from the world: but at
eſurrection, when we ſhall bear the image of
mmortality, this will be an evident mark of our
" the ſons of GOD." As our bleſſed SA-
R was " mightily declared to be the SON of
D, by his reſurrection from the dead;" ſo like-
hall his members be declared to be " the chil-
en of GOD," by that glorious change that
be made in them at the reſurrection, when
s mortal ſhall put on immortality." Then we
the ſons of GOD" indeed in an eminent
er, when " we can die no more."

d therefore it is worth our obſervation, that
ripture gives us the title of " the children of
D," more eſpecially upon this account, Luke
5, 36. " But they which ſhall be counted
rthy to obtain that world, and the reſurrection
m the dead, can die no more, but are equal to
angels, and are the children of GOD, being
children of the reſurrection." And Rom.
9. the reſurrection is call'd, " the manifeſtation
" of

SERM. CLXXXVI. of the ſons of God." And ver. 21. "Our being "delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the "glorious liberty of the ſons of God," And ver. 23. it is call'd our adoption or ſonſhip; "We our "ſelves groan within ourſelves, waiting for the "adoption, viz. the redemption of our bodies." This is the firſt thing, wherein our likeneſs and reſemblance to God in our future ſtate of happineſs ſhall conſiſt, the immortality of our nature; without which we could not be capable of the bleſſed viſion of God, and the everlaſting enjoyment of him.

II. It ſhall conſiſt in the purity of our ſouls. Now purity is a freedom from ſin, which is the great ſtain and defilement of the ſoul. Before we can be admitted into heaven, we muſt be quit of all thoſe vicious and corrupt inclinations, of all thoſe inordinate deſires and paſſions, which defile our ſouls, and render us unlike to God. In this world, every good man does "mortify his earthly and corrupt affec-"tions," and in ſome meaſure, "bring them into "obedience and ſubjection to the law of God." But ſtill there are ſome relicks of ſin, ſome ſpots and imperfections in the holineſs of the beſt men. But upon our entrance into the other world, we ſhall quite "put off the old man with the affections and "luſts thereof," we ſhall be perfectly "delivered "from this body of ſin and death," and together with this mortal nature part with all the remainders of ſin and corruption, which cleave to this mortal ſtate. For till "our earthly houſe of this taber-"nacle be diſſolved," we ſhall never be wholly cleanſed from the leproſy of ſin. While we are in this world, we muſt be continually "cleanſing our-"ſelves from all filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit, and "perfecting

"perfecting holineſs in the fear of GOD:" but we ſhall never be wholly cleanſed, we ſhall never be perfectly holy in this life; but in the other ſtate, all ſin and imperfection ſhall be done away, and we ſhall be "preſented to GOD, without ſpot or wrinkle, or any "ſuch thing." And perfect holineſs is the image of GOD, and the very neareſt reſemblance of the divine nature, that creatures are capable of.

But how our ſouls ſhall be purified from thoſe remainders of ſin and dregs of corruption, which are in the beſt men, while they are in this world, it is not neceſſary that we ſhould be able perfectly to explain. It ought to be ſufficient to us, that he who hath promiſed it, is able to do it one way or other; only I am confident, and have great reaſon to be ſo, that this purification will not be wrought by the fire of purgatory. For if there be any ſuch thing, as there is not the leaſt ſpark of divine revelation for it, (and how any body ſhould come to know it otherwiſe, is not eaſy to imagine) it is granted to be a material fire; and if it be ſo, it is no ways fitted, either for the puniſhment or purgation of impure ſouls. Indeed if men carried their bodies into purgatory, the fire of it might be a cruel torment and vexation to them: but how a fire ſhould ſcorch a ſpirit, is I believe beyond the ſubtilty of a ſchoolman to make out; much leſs is it fitted to purge and take away ſin. And if the truth were known, it was never ſeriouſly intended for this purpoſe, to do any good to the dead, but to drain the purſes of the living, by deluding them with a vain hope of getting their friends delivered out of that imaginary torment.

But we who take our faith from the word of GOD, and not from the fictions of men, do believe that the

SERM. CLXXXVI. the ſouls of good men do immediately paſs out of this world into a ſtate of happineſs; and that he who beſtows this happineſs upon them, does qualify them for it, before he admits them into it. And if we conſider the matter well, we ſhall find that a man who hath truly repented of his ſins, and through the mercy of GOD in JESUS CHRIST hath obtained of GOD the pardon and forgiveneſs of them, and is firmly reſolved againſt ſin, and doth truly endeavour to mortify his luſts, and to lead a holy life, and by the grace of GOD does "deny ungodlineſs "and worldly luſts, and lives ſoberly, and righte-"ouſly, and godly in this preſent world;" I ſay, we ſhall find that ſuch a man is "not far from the "kingdom of GOD," but very nearly qualified and diſpoſed for it, and that there hardly wants any thing to make ſuch a man perfectly good, but only to remove out of his way thoſe obſtacles and impediments to virtue, and to free him from thoſe circumſtances of infirmity and temptation, which do unavoidably encompaſs us in this world; ſuch as are ignorance, and the inſtigations of our bodily temper to irregular appetites and paſſions, that which the apoſtle calls "the law in our members warring againſt the law "of our minds;" the neceſſities of this life, the temptations of the devil and of bad company, and the like; all which do appertain to this ſtate, and which we ſhall be quit of, ſo ſoon as we leave this world, and put off theſe frail and mortal bodies: and when theſe are removed, we are free from the bondage of ſin, and have nothing to hinder and divert that ſtrong bent and inclination of mind, which is in every good man, to do the will of GOD. So that our very tranſlation into another ſtate does of it ſelf

ſelf aſſert us into this "glorious liberty of the ſons "of GOD." And if beſides this any thing more be neceſſary to cleanſe us from ſin, and perfect the holineſs and purity of our ſouls, we need not be ſolicitous about the way and manner of it, but may reſt confident, that "he who hath begun a good "work in us, will perfect it in the day of CHRIST;" and that what is wanting in our love to GOD, or charity to men, in goodneſs, and meekneſs, and purity, or any grace or virtue whatſoever, ſhall then be added to them, that "ſo an entrance may be mini-"ſtred to us abundantly into the everlaſting king-"dom of our LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS "CHRIST. This we know, that when we ſhall "appear, we ſhall be like him;" like him in the immortality of our nature, and in the purity of our ſouls, which are the very image of GOD, and the moſt expreſs character of the divine nature. The

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Fourth and laſt thing remains, which is to ſhew the neceſſary connexion which is between our likeneſs and conformity to GOD, and our ſight and enjoyment of him: "we know that we ſhall be like "him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is." Which implies that unleſs we be "like GOD," we are in no capacity of "the bleſſed ſight and enjoyment of him."

I. Likeneſs to GOD in the immortality of our nature, is neceſſary to make us capable of the happineſs of the next life; which conſiſts in the bleſſed and perpetual viſion and enjoyment of GOD. If our natures were mortal, we were incapable of ſeeing GOD. What was ſaid of Moſes, is equally true of all mankind in this ſtate of mortality. "We cannot "ſee the face of GOD and live." Nothing that is frail and dying can endure the ſplendor of ſo great

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a glory; nothing that ſtands in need of continual reparation, as "fleſh and blood" does, can "inherit the kingdom of GOD;" nothing but a fixt and immutable nature, which can never decay, is capable of everlaſting happineſs.

But this part of likeneſs and conformity to GOD, though it be neceſſary to make us capable of the felicity of another world, yet it is no part of our duty and care: if we endeavour after the other, which conſiſts in holineſs and purity, GOD will work this in us, and for us, without any concurrence of ours. All that he requires of us, is, that we firmly believe it, and patiently expect it, and fervently pray for it, and aſpire after it. And indeed our likeneſs to GOD in this reſpect, depends upon our conformity to him in purity and holineſs. For as "by ſin "death entered into the world, and ſo death paſſed "upon all men:" ſo nothing but holineſs can reſtore us to immortality.

The foundation of all our hopes of a bleſſed immortality, is to be laid in the price of our redemption, as the meritorious cauſe of it, and in our being "renewed after the image of GOD, in righteouſneſs "and true holineſs," as the proper qualification and capacity for it on our parts. We muſt "have our "fruit unto holineſs," if we look that "the end "ſhould be everlaſting life." And to this purpoſe it is excellently ſaid in the Wiſdom of Solomon, "the "keeping of GOD's commandments is the aſſurance of "immortality, and immortality makes us like to GOD." And therefore I ſhall mainly apply myſelf to the

IId thing, namely, to ſhew that our likeneſs to GOD in the purity of our ſouls is neceſſary to make us capable of the bleſſed ſight and enjoyment of him in the

ife. It is neceſſary as a condition of the thing; neceſſary as a qualification in the perſon.

s neceſſary as a condition of the thing to be d on our part, before we can expect that uld make good the promiſe of eternal life ineſs to us. The expreſs conſtitution and ap- t of God hath made it neceſſary, who hath " without holineſs no man ſhall ſee him;" f we ſow to the fleſh, we ſhall of the fleſh orruption; but if we ſow to the SPIRIT," f we be ſanctified and renewed, " we ſhall SPIRIT reap everlaſting life." And if this ere arbitrary condition, impoſed upon us by ign will of God, without any neceſſity nature of the thing, yet we ought to accept ery eaſy condition; when he hath only ſaid, phet did to Naaman, " waſh and be clean." no man can refuſe ſo great a benefit and conferred upon ſuch cheap and tolerable God hath promiſed us eternal life; a mighty ndeed! for the obtaining of which, no con- at is poſſible can be thought hard and unrea- And what does he require of us for the ob- f it? but that we " cleanſe ourſelves from hineſs of fleſh and ſpirit, and perfect holineſs fear of God;" that is, that we do with all diligence abſtain from ſin, and endeavour to y life; to conform ourſelves to the will of d to be obedient to his laws. He does not erfect holineſs of us in this life, but a ſincere r after it, and he hath promiſed to aſſiſt our r; and if we go as far as we can, he will hat is wanting. So that there is nothing in ut what is very poſſible for every man to do,

SERM. CLXXXVI. do, by the aſſiſtance of that grace which he hath promiſed to afford us; and if it be poſſible, we cannot anſwer our neglect of it, when all our hopes of happineſs depend upon it. But this is not all, there is yet,

2. A farther neceſſity of it, inwardly to qualify and diſpoſe us for the ſight and enjoyment of GOD. We cannot poſſibly love GOD, nor take delight in him, unleſs we be like him in the temper and diſpoſition of our minds. If we would know what will make us happy, we muſt look upon the great pattern of happineſs, and that is GOD himſelf, who as he is the moſt powerful, and wiſe, and every way perfect, ſo is he the happieſt being in the world. So that if we would be happy, we muſt be like GOD. We cannot be ſo perfect as he is, and therefore we cannot be ſo happy; but if we would be as happy, as creatures are capable of being, we muſt endeavour to be as like GOD as it is poſſible for creatures to be.

We muſt reſemble him as near as we can, in thoſe perfections wherein he is imitable by us. And theſe are, as I may call them, the moral perfections of his nature, which the ſcripture uſually comprehends under the name of holineſs; his goodneſs, and patience, and mercy, and juſtice, and truth, and faithfulneſs; and theſe, as they are the great glory, ſo the chief felicity of the divine nature.

Goodneſs is a perfection of itſelf, though it were without any great degree of knowledge or power. A poor man, and one that is ignorant in compariſon of others, may yet be a very good man. But power and knowledge ſeparated from goodneſs, are not perfections, but may be applied to the worſt and moſt miſchievous

miſchievous purpoſes; as we ſee in the devil, who hath both theſe qualities in a high degree. SERM. CLXXXVI.

If we could ſuppoſe an omnipotent and all-knowing being, that were deſtitute of goodneſs, he would not only be troubleſome to others, but uneaſy to himſelf. Without goodneſs there can be no happineſs. So that thoſe perfections which contribute moſt to the happineſs of the divine nature, are the eaſieſt to be imitated by us. We may be like GOD in his holineſs, that is, in his goodneſs, and patience, and mercy, and righteouſneſs, and truth. And theſe perfections are the very temper and diſpoſition of happineſs; for they are the nature of GOD, who is therefore eſſentially happy, becauſe he is a being conſtituted of theſe perfections. And ſo far as we imitate GOD in theſe, we are "partakers of a divine nature; we dwell in GOD, and GOD in us." So our apoſtle tells us in the ivth chapter, ver. 16. "GOD is love; and he that dwelleth in love, "dwelleth in GOD, and GOD in him." Theſe divine qualities make us fit company for our heavenly FATHER, and capable of the joys of heaven, and the delights of that glorious place.

And the contrary temper and diſpoſition is the nature of the devil, and the very thing which makes it impoſſible for him to be happy. Malice, and envy, and revenge, are unquiet paſſions; and in what nature ſoever they are, they are as vexatious and tormentful to itſelf, as they are troubleſome and miſchievous to others. Theſe are a hell within us, and are as natural cauſes of miſery, as bodily diſeaſes are of pain and reſtleſſneſs; and while theſe furies are in us, nothing without us can make us happy.

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The capacity and foundation of all felicity muſt be laid in the inward frame of our minds, in a godlike temper and diſpoſition. Till the image of his holineſs and goodneſs, which hath been defaced by ſin, be renewed upon our minds, we are utterly incapable of the enjoyment of the firſt and chief good, in which all our felicity does conſiſt.

And thus you ſee what a neceſſary connexion there is between our likeneſs and conformity to GOD, and the bleſſed viſion and enjoyment of him. All that now remains, is to draw ſome inferences from what hath been diſcourſed upon this argument, and ſo I ſhall conclude.

I. This ſhews us, how impoſſible it is to reconcile a wicked life with the hopes of heaven. The terms of our happineſs are firmly and immutably fixed, like "the foundation of the earth, which cannot be "moved;" nay ſooner may "heaven and earth paſs "away," than a wicked man enter into the kingdom of heaven. If we continue in a ſinful and impenitent ſtate, we muſt neceſſarily "come ſhort of "the glory of GOD." And therefore all thoſe devices which men have found out, to excuſe themſelves from a holy life, and yet to maintain hopes of getting to heaven at laſt, are but fooliſh arts of ſecurity, and tricks to undo ourſelves quietly, and without any great diſturbance. Some think to be ſaved by an external profeſſion of religion, though it have no force and efficacy upon their lives; ſome by being of the only true Church, wherein ſalvation is to be had: and yet if it were true, that there were any one party or community of chriſtians, out of which there were no ſalvation, I am ſure this likewiſe is true, that there is no church wherein a wicked man can be ſaved.

Others rely upon abſolutions and indulgences, and hope, notwithſtanding all the unrighteouſneſs and ungodlineſs of their lives, to do their buſineſs at laſt that way. But can any man be ſo fooliſh, as to think that any church or prieſt can forgive a man upon other terms, than thoſe upon which only GOD hath declared he will forgive ſinners? SERM. CLXXXVI.

Others hope to be ſaved by the righteouſneſs of CHRIST, without any of their own. But what a preſumption is this, to think that any thing that CHRIST hath done for us, will avail us while we cheriſh our luſts, and live in the contempt of his laws? "let no man deceive you; he that doth "righteouſneſs is righteous, even as he is righteous." The righteouſneſs of CHRIST ſhall never be imputed to any for their juſtification, but thoſe who are "ſanctified by the renewing of the HOLY "GHOST."

So that nothing can be vainer than a wicked man's hopes of heaven. The whole deſign of the goſpel is, to convince men that bleſſedneſs belongs only to the righteous, and that no man that allows himſelf in any wickedneſs and impiety of life, ſhall have any "inheritance in the kingdom of GOD and "CHRIST."

II. The conſideration of the indiſpenſible neceſſity of our likeneſs and conformity to GOD in holineſs and purity, to make us capable of the happineſs of the next life, calls loudly upon us, to endeavour after it in this life. So it follows in the words immediately after the text, "we ſhall be like him, for we "ſhall ſee him as he is: and every man that hath "this hope in him, purifieth himſelf even as he is "pure." 'Tis true indeed, nothing but perfect ho-

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lineſs makes us capable of the enjoyment of G and we cannot be perfectly holy in this life. But we are to conſider, that if we do not purify ſelves in ſome meaſure in this world, if we d begin this work here, it will never be perfected after; ſuch diſpoſitions as we carry with us o this world, ſtick by us for ever. Indeed, if be good, the degree of them ſhall be perfected; if they be bad, they ſhall never be altered. If " image of GOD be renewed upon us" in this " we ſhall be changed from glory to glory," i other, " by the SPIRIT of the LORD." B we be utterly unlike GOD when we die, death make no change in us for the better; we ſhall " to our place," and " inherit the portion of " ners." We did not endeavour to be like G and therefore we can never be admitted to the ſed ſight and enjoyment of him; for there is rect and eternal oppoſition between the holy n of GOD, and an impure creature; and till this poſition be removed, we can have no commu with him. And 'tis too late to take away this poſition between GOD and an impure ſoul ir other world; becauſe our condition is then cluded, and we ſhall remain for ever ſuch as we made ourſelves, while we were in this world.

Now is the time, " this is the day of ſalvati Now we may repent and leave our ſins, and p ourſelves; and by purity make ourſelves like to G and by our likeneſs to him render our ſouls capab being admitted to the bleſſed ſight of him, " in w " preſence is fulneſs of joy, and at whoſe right-h " are pleaſures for evermore."

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So that we ought to reſolve upon one of theſe two things, either to give over all thoughts of happineſs in another world; or to qualify ourſelves for it, by "purifying ourſelves, as GOD is pure:" for till we are like GOD, we are not capable of enjoying him. While we live "in ungodlineſs and worldly luſts," we are as unlike GOD as is poſſible; and there are but two ways imaginable, whereby to bring a conformity and likeneſs between GOD and us, either by changing GOD or ourſelves. Now the nature of GOD is fixed and immutable, he cannot recede from his holy nature: therefore we muſt leave our ſins. 'Tis certain we cannot change GOD; therefore we muſt endeavour to change ourſelves. Rather think of purifying thy corrupt nature, which may be done; than of making any alteration in GOD, "with whom is no variableneſs, nor "ſhadow of turning."

Once GOD hath condeſcended ſo far, as to take our nature upon him, to bring us to a participation of his own divine nature, and make us capable of happineſs: but if this will not do, we muſt not expect that GOD will put off his own nature to make us happy.

# SERMON CLXXXVII.

## The wiſdom of religion juſtified, in the different ends of good and bad men.

PROV. xiv. 32.

*The wicked is driven away in his wickedneſs: but the righteous hath hope in his death.*

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SOLOMON, all along this book of the Proverbs, doth recommend to us religion and the fear of GOD, by the name, and under the notion of wiſdom, Chap. i. 7. "The fear of the "LORD is the beginning of knowledge," Chap. ix. 10, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning "of wiſdom; and the knowledge of the holy is un- "derſtanding." Hereby ſignifying to us, that religion is the fundamental principle of wiſdom, by which our whole life, and all the actions of it, ought to be conducted and governed; and that all wiſdom which doth not begin here, and lay religion for a foundation, and which doth not act upon ſuppoſition of the truth of the principles of religion, viz. the belief of a GOD, and his providence, of the immortality of our ſouls, and the rewards and puniſhments of another life, is but "wiſdom falſly "ſo called;" becauſe it is prepoſterous, and begins at the wrong end, and proceeds upon a falſe ſuppoſition, and wrong ſcheme of things; and conſequently our whole life, and all the actions and deſigns

ſigns of it, do run upon a perpetual miſtake, and falſe ſtatings of our own caſe; and whatever we do purſuant to this miſtake, is fooliſh in itſelf, and will be fatal in the iſſue and conſequence of it. SERM CLXXXVII

For he that takes it for granted that there is no GOD, and that the world is not governed by the providence of any ſuperior being, but by chance; that his ſoul dies with his body, and that there is no life after this: he that proceeds upon theſe principles, is free from all fetters and obligations of conſcience, and hath no reaſon to regard any rule of right and juſtice, of virtue and goodneſs, farther than they conduce to his own eaſe and pleaſure, his convenience and ſafety in this world; he hath nothing to do, but to contrive his own preſent happineſs, and to live as long as he can; and becauſe he knows he muſt die, to compoſe himſelf to undergo it as contentedly and to bear the pain of it as chearfully and patiently, and to act this laſt part as decently as he can, being ſecured by his own principles againſt all future miſery and danger, becauſe death makes an utter end of him.

This is a very conſiſtent theory, and hath but one fault, that it is not true at the bottom, and will fail us when we come to lay our whole weight upon it. It is juſt as the prophet deſcribes "the ſtaff "of the broken reed of Egypt, whereon if a man "lean, it will go into his hand and pierce it." Such are the principles of infidelity, to all that truſt in them; when they ſhould ſtand us in moſt ſtead, and when we come to lean hard upon them, they will not only fail us, but go into our very heart, and pierce it with ſharp pain and anguiſh. In the days of our health and proſperity, the ſpirit of a man

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may bear up itſelf by its own natural force and ſtrength; and falſe principles are like anticks in a building, which ſeem to crouch under the weight of an arch, as if they bore it up, when in truth they are borne up by it. But when theſe men fall into any great calamity, or death makes towards them in good earneſt, then is the trial of theſe principles, of what ſtrength they are, and what weight they will bear; and we commonly ſee that they do not only fail thoſe who truſt in them, but they vaniſh and diſappear like dreams and mere illuſions of the imagination, when a man awakes out of ſleep; and the man that was borne up by them before with ſo much confidence, can now feel no ſubſtance and reality in them; he cannot now be an atheiſt if he would; but GOD, and the other world, begin to be as great realities to him, as if they were preſent to his bodily eye. And now the principles of infidelity are ſo far from miniſtering any comfort and good hopes to him, that they fill him with horror, and anguiſh, and deſpair; and are ſo far from quieting his mind, that there is nothing but ſtorm and tempeſt there. "The wicked is "driven away in his wickedneſs: but the righteous "hath hope in his death." "The wicked," that is, the ſinner, the hardened and impenitent ſinner, "is driven away;" which may either ſignify the ſudden and violent end many times of bad men, they are carried away as it were by a tempeſt, anſwerable to that expreſſion, Prov. x. 25. "As the whirlwind "paſſeth, ſo the wicked is no more:" or elſe the word may ſignify to be caſt down and dejected; and then it imports that trouble and deſpondency of mind, that anguiſh and deſpair, which ariſeth from the

ne guilt of a wicked life. " Is driven away in his SERM.
' wickedneſs;" the word in the original is, " in CLXXXVII.
' his evil," which may either refer to the evil of
in, or of affliction and calamity, and it will come
nuch to one in which ſenſe we take it. According
o the firſt ſenſe of the word evil, the meaning will
e, that the ſinner, when he comes to die, is in great
rouble and deſpondency of mind. becauſe of his
vicked life; hath no comfort, no good hopes con-
erning his future ſtate, according to that other ſaying
f Solomon, Prov. xi. 23. " The expectation of
' the wicked is wrath." If we take the word " evil"
n the latter ſenſe, for the evil of affliction and ca-
amity, then the meaning is, that bad men, when
hey fall into any great evil and calamity, more eſpe-
ially upon the approach of death, (for that, as the
aſt and greateſt of evils, is probably intended, as
ppears by the oppoſition in the next words, " the
' righteous hath hope in his death") I ſay, that
ad men, when they fall into any great evil or cala-
ity, eſpecially upon the approach of death, are full
f trouble and diſquiet, by reaſon of their guilt,
nd deſtitute of all comfort and hope in that need
ul time. And this is moſt agreeable to the oppo
ite part of this proverb or ſentence, " but the righ
" teous hath hope in his death;" that is, for good
nan, when any evil and calamity overtakes him,
though it be the moſt terrible of all, death itſelf, i
full of peace, and comfort, and good hopes; whe
there is nothing but ſtorms without, all is calm
within, he hath ſomething which ſtill ſupports him
nd bears him up.

So that Solomon, in this ſentence or proverb, ſeems
o deſign to recommend religion and virtue to us, from

SERM. CLXXXVII. the conſideration of the different ends of good and bad men, ſo obvious to common obſervation, and generally ſpeaking, and for the moſt part, which (as I have often obſerved) is all the truth that is to be expected in moral and proverbial ſpeeches; that for the moſt part, the end of good men is full of peace and comfort, and good hopes of their future condition; but the end of bad men quite contrary, full of anguiſh and trouble, of horror and deſpair, without peace or comfort, or hope of any good to befal them afterwards. The righteous man hath great peace and ſerenity in his mind at that time; is not only contented, but glad to die; does not only ſubmit and yield to it, but deſires it as much better. And ſo ſome read the words, "the righteous deſires "or hopes to die:" but the wicked man and the ſinner dreads the thoughts and approaches of death, quits life with great reluctancy, clings to it, and hangs upon it as long as he can, and is not without great violence parted from it. The good man goes out of the world willingly and contentedly: but the wicked is "driven away," not without great force and conſtraint, with much reluctancy, and in great trouble and perplexity of mind, what will become of him for ever.

You ſee the meaning of the words, that they contain a great truth, and very well worthy of our moſt attentive regard and conſideration; becauſe, if this be generally and for the moſt part true, which Solomon here aſſerts, then this is a mighty teſtimony on the behalf of piety and virtue, and plainly ſhews, that the principles of religion and virtue are proof againſt all aſſaults to which humane nature is liable; and that the principles of infidelity and vice

do

do ſhrink and give back when it comes to the trial. And this, to any wiſe and conſiderate man, is as good as a demonſtration, that the religious man is in the right, and proceeds upon principles of ſound and true wiſdom, and "hath choſen the better "part:" but that the infidel and the wicked man is in the wrong, and under a fatal miſtake, which he ſeldom diſcerns till it be too late to rectify it. SERM. CLXXXVII.

Now in the handling of this argument, I ſhall do theſe three things;

Firſt, I ſhall ſhew that this obſervation of Solomon, concerning the different end of good and bad men, and the final iſſue and event of a virtuous and vicious courſe of life, is generally true, and that the exceptions on either ſide to the contrary are but few, and not of force to infringe the truth of the obſervation.

Secondly, I ſhall conſider whence this difference proceeds, and I ſhall endeavour to ſhew that it is founded in the true nature and reaſon of things. And

Thirdly, That if this be true, it is a demonſtration on the ſide of religion, and does fully juſtify the wiſdom of it.

Firſt, I ſhall endeavour to ſhew, that this obſervation of Solomon, concerning the different end of good and bad men, and the final iſſue and event of a virtuous and vicious courſe of life, is generally found true, and that the exceptions on either ſide to the contrary are but few in compariſon, and by no means of ſufficient force to infringe the general truth of this obſervation; I ſay, that this obſervation of the wiſe man, is generally and for the moſt part true, which (as I mentioned before) is all the truth that is to be expected, in moral and proverbial ſentences.

And

SERM. CLXXXVII. And for this I appeal to the common and daily experience of mankind, whether we do not generally ſee religious and good men to have great eaſe and comfort, and ſometimes great joy and tranſport in their minds, from the reflexion upon an innocent and uſeful, an holy and virtuous courſe of life. David was ſo confident of this, that he appeals to common obſervation and experience for the truth of it, Pſal. xxxvii. 37. "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace." Or as this text is rendred in our old tranſlation, "keep innocency, take heed to the thing that is right; for that ſhall bring a man peace at the laſt." And he gives the reaſon of this, ver. 39. becauſe GOD ſtands by them to ſupport them in this needful time, with the comfortable hopes of his ſalvation, "the ſalvation of the righteous is of the LORD, he is their help in the time of trouble." As they have ſincerely endeavoured to ſerve GOD, ſo they have great hopes and confidence of his mercy and goodneſs to them, that he will ſtand by them, and ſupport them in their greateſt diſtreſs, and guide and conduct them to happineſs at the laſt; and in this confidence they can ſay with David, Pſal. xvi. 8, 9, 11. "I have ſet the LORD always before me: becauſe he is at my right hand, I ſhall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my fleſh alſo ſhall reſt in hope." For "thou wilt ſhew me the path of life; in thy preſence is fulneſs of joy, at thy right hand there are pleaſures for evermore." And Pſal. xxxi. 5. "Into thy hand I commit my ſpirit, O LORD GOD of truth." And Pſal. xlviii. 14. "This GOD is our GOD for ever and ever,

" ever, he will be our guide even unto death." And again, Pſal. lxxiii. 23, 24, 25, 26. " Nevertheleſs, " I am continually with thee: thou haſt holden me " by my right hand. Thou ſhalt guide me with " thy counſel, and afterward receive me to glory. " Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is " none upon earth that I deſire beſides thee. My " fleſh and my heart faileth: but GOD is the " ſtrength of my heart, and my portion for ever." Thus a good man not only in the contemplation of death, and upon the approach of it, but even under the very pangs of it, is apt to comfort himſelf in the divine mercy and goodneſs, and to rejoice in the hopes of the glory of GOD.



But the wicked, on the contrary, when death makes its approach towards them, the guilt of their wicked lives flies in their faces, and diſturbs their minds, and fills them with horror and amazement, with " a fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery in- " dignation to conſume them." " The expectation " of the wicked is wrath," ſaith Solomon, Prov. xi. 23. " what is the hope of the hypocrite," that is, of the wicked man, " when GOD ſhall take away " his ſoul?" Job xxvii. 8. In their life-time they neglected GOD and religion, and perhaps denied him, or ſaid unto him with thoſe in the xxiſt chap. ver. 14. " depart from us, for we deſire not the " knowledge of thy ways;" and when they come to die, they find that GOD is " departed from " them," They have not the confidence to look up to him, or to expect any mercy or favour from him, being conſcious to themſelves, that they have " denied the GOD which is above," or at leaſt neglected and deſpiſed him; and now " the terrors of " the

SERM. CLXXXVII. "the almighty take hold of them, and his arrows "ſtick faſt in them," and wound their conſciences, and they cannot pluck them out, or get rid of them; their ſpirits are ready to ſink within them, and the principles of infidelity which they once relied upon, now fail them, and inſtead of miniſtring any comfort and confidence to them, they pierce them to the heart, and are the greateſt ground of their trouble and deſpair.

So that here is a very viſible and remarkable difference between good and bad men when they come to die. Good men have commonly a great calm and ſerenity in their minds, are full of good hopes of the mercy and favour of GOD to them, and of the ſenſe of "his loving kindneſs, which is better "than life it ſelf"; and are willing to leave this world, in the comfortable expectation and aſſurance of a better condition after death; and not only willing, but many times heartily glad, that they are going out of this "vale of tears," out of this ſink of ſin and ſorrows, that they are quitting theſe drooping manſions, and exchanging theſe "earthly taber-"nacles, for a building of GOD, a houſe not made "with hands, eternal in the heavens:" whereas the wicked is full of trouble and anguiſh, and his mind in greater pain and diſorder than his body; all ſtorm and tempeſt, "like the troubled ſea, when "it cannot reſt; there is no peace, ſaith my GOD, "to the wicked." And "how can there be peace," when his whoredoms and adulteries, his repeated acts of drunkenneſs and intemperance, his profane oaths and blaſphemies, have been ſo many? when he is conſcious to himſelf what a life he hath led, and is thoroughly awakened to a juſt ſenſe of the evil of his doings?

ings? and when death makes up to him, how SERM. es he dread the ſight and thoughts of it, and how CLXXXVII. es he hanker after life, as if all his happineſs de-nded upon it, and ended with it? and at laſt, like e young man in the goſpel, "he goes away ſor-rowful, becauſe, perhaps, he had great poſſeſ-ſions" in this world, and hath no hopes at all in e other. "This is the portion of a wicked man from GOD, and the heritage appointed to him by GOD."

There are, I confeſs, ſome exceptions to the con-ary on both ſides; but they are but few in compa-ſon, and by no means ſufficient to infringe the neral truth of this obſervation.

On the other hand, ſome good men are very me-ancholy and diſpirited, when they come to die, and ave the world full of fears and jealouſies concern-g their future condition; and this may proceed om ſeveral cauſes. Perhaps they are naturally of dark and melancholy temper, which is uſually ightened and increaſed by bodily weakneſs and diſ-mper; and in this caſe it is no wonder, if the con-lerations of religion be not ſufficient to ſcatter eſe clouds, and to over-rule and correct the irregu-rities of our bodily temper; becauſe the principles d conſiderations of religion do not work naturally d by way of phyſick, but morally, and by way conviction and counſel. Sometimes this fear and jection of mind in good men, proceeds from mere wneſs and faintneſs of ſpirit, naturally cauſed by e load and continuance of the diſtemper which y labour under, and by which the mind is like-ſe in ſome degree weakened and broken; and en this happens, it is uſually very viſible, and

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conſequently the account of it eaſy and obvious; and ſometimes perhaps we are charitably miſtaken in our good man, and either he is not a ſincerely good man, or not ſo good as we took him to be; perhaps his life hath been very unequal, and full of great failings: and in either caſe, it is no wonder, if the man have not that peace and comfort, which is anſwerable to our good opinion of him; if this man be not ſincerely good, there is no real foundation of peace and comfort; for "the "hope of the hypocrite ſhall periſh: whoſe hope "ſhall be cut off, and whoſe truſt ſhall be as a ſpi-"der's web. He ſhall lean upon his houſe, but it ſhall "not ſtand; he ſhall hold it faſt, but it ſhall not "endure" as one of Job's friends ſpeaks, Job viii. 14, 15. And ver. 20. "Behold, GOD will not caſt "away a perfect, or ſincere man; neither will "he help, or ſupport the evil doers." Or tho' he have been in the main a good man, yet perhaps with a great mixture of imperfection, and many great failings, and neglects; and then it is no wonder, if his mind be not ſo calm, and clear of doubts and jealouſies concerning his condition: for proportionably to the breaches and inequalities of our obedience, and our more and greater failings, will our peace and comfort, living and dying, be naturally abated and interrupted. But theſe caſes are not many, it is ſufficient that it is generally otherwiſe with good men, and that their end is peace. And this is ſo remarkable, that Balaam, when he was reckoning up the bleſſings and privileges of the people of Iſrael, the type of good men in all ages, he takes particular notice of their happy end, as a moſt ſignal and invaluable bleſſing; which made him break

break out into that wiſh, Numb. xxiii. 10. "Let SERM.
"me die the death of the righteous, and let my laſt CLXXXVII.
"end be like his."

And on the other hand, it cannot be denied, but that ſome very bad men, (as bad as we can well imagine) have paſt out of this world, not only quiet and undiſturbed, but with a great deal of courage and reſolution. And this I believe in fact and experience, at leaſt according to my beſt obſervation, is the more rare caſe of the two; for a notorious bad man to die in perfect peace, than for a good man to die in great trouble and perplexity of mind. But this, when it happens, may probably enough be aſcribed to one or more of theſe cauſes, either to the miſtake of the by-ſtanders, who take ſilence for peace; and becauſe the man is of a ſtrong reſolution, and hath a good command of himſelf, and does not think fit to trouble others, in a matter in which he thinks they can give him no comfort and relief; they interpret this to be tranquillity of mind: becauſe he holds his peace and ſays nothing, they think he hath peace, and that all is quiet within. But I remember the obſervation of a very wiſe hiſtorian, Phil. Comines, who ſays, that he knew in his time ſeveral great perſons, who in ordinary converſation, and to a ſuperficial view, ſeemed to be very happy and contented, but yet to them who knew them more intimately, and in their private freedoms and receſſes, were the moſt miſerable and diſcontented perſons in the world. This I confeſs is very rare, for men to conceal a very great trouble, and more yet for a man to diſſemble when dying; and yet there is reaſon to believe it ſometimes happens.

SERM. CLXXXVII. Sometimes the quiet death of a very bad man, proceeds from ſtupidity, and want of a juſt ſenſe of the danger of his condition, and this from want of diſcipline and inſtruction in the nature and principles of religion: this temper looks like courage, becauſe it is fearleſs of danger; but this fearleſſneſs is founded in great ignorance and want of apprehenſion; whereas a true courage diſcerns the danger, and yet thinks it fit and reaſonable to venture upon it. Now this ſtupidity of dying men, who have lived very ill, is commonly the caſe of ſuch as have been brought up in great ignorance, and have lived in great ſenſuality, by which means their ſpirits are immerſed, and even ſtifled in carnality and ſenſe; and no wonder, if they who live like beaſts, die after the ſame manner. And thus our SAVIOUR repreſents the rich glutton in the parable, as never coming to himſelf, and a ſenſe of his condition, till he was awakened by the flames of hell; Luke xvi. 22, 23. "The rich man "alſo died, and was buried, and in hell he lift up "his eyes, being in torment." As if he had never been awakened till then, his voluptuous and ſenſual courſe of life rendering him inſenſible of another world.

Or elſe this falſe peace may be aſcribed to the deluſion of falſe principles, by virtue whereof it is often ſeen, that men die in a very bad cauſe, not only without any regret and trouble, but with chearfulneſs and ſatisfaction: and this is not to be wondered at, becauſe every man's conſcience is a kind of GOD to him; and whether a man be in the right or wrong, ſo long as he thinks he does well, "and his heart "condemns him not," he is apt "to have confi- "dence towards GOD;" but for all that, it greatly concerns

concerns every man to take great care to inform his conſcience. For if men will not be impartial in their inquiry after truth, and be not ready "to receive it "in the love of it," St. Paul tells us, "that for this "cauſe, GOD may ſend them ſtrong deluſions, that "they ſhould believe a lye, and that they might be "damned, becauſe they believed not the truth, but "had pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs," 2 Theſſ. ii 10, 11, 12. that is, in falſhood and impoſture: for ſo the word ἀδικία, which is here rendered unrighteouſneſs, is ſometimes uſed in the new teſtament.



And this is the laſt cauſe I ſhall mention, to which the falſe peace of wicked men, when they come to die, is to be aſcribed, viz. to the laſt judgment of GOD, who permits great ſinners to be ſo hardened in an evil courſe, as neither living nor dying, to be awakened to a ſenſe of their condition; ſuch as the apoſtle ſpeaks of, 1 Tim. iv. 2. who are ſaid to have "their conſciences ſeared, as it were, with a hot iron." This, it is to be hoped, is but the caſe of a few, that are thus utterly forſaken of GOD, and left to periſh in their own hardneſs and obſtinacy. This is like a gangrene in the body, which mortifies the part, and leaves it without ſenſe, and thereby incapable of recovery. I proceed, in the

Second place, to ſhew whence this difference between good and bad men, when they come to die, does proceed. And here I ſhall endeavour to ſhew, that this difference is founded in the true nature and reaſon of the things themſelves; in the nature of religion and virtue, and of impiety and vice; in the different ways and courſes of good and bad men, which do naturally tend to theſe different ends.

SERM. CLXXXVII. And to make out this more clearly and diſtinctly, I ſhall endeavour to manifeſt theſe two things.

I. That a religious and virtuous life, is a real ground of peace and ſerenity of mind, of comfort and joy, under all the evils and calamities of life, and eſpecially at the hour of death.

II. That impiety and wickedneſs is a real foundation of guilt and fear, of horror and deſpair in the day of adverſity and affliction, and more eſpecially in the approaches of death.

I. That a religious and virtuous life is a real ground of peace and ſerenity of mind, of comfort and joy, under all the evils and calamities of life, and eſpecially at the hour of death.

Under the evils and calamities of life, innocency is a great ſtay and ſupport to our minds under ſufferings, and will bear up our ſpirits, when nothing elſe can, eſpecially if a man ſuffer for a good conſcience, "and for righteouſneſs ſake;" becauſe then, beſide the comfort of innocency, we are intitled in a ſpecial manner to the favour of GOD, and the comforts and ſupports of his HOLY SPIRIT, and the hopes of a glorious reward from that GOD, for whoſe ſake and in whoſe cauſe we ſuffer. All trouble is tolerable to him who hath no burden of guilt upon his mind, to him who is at peace with his own conſcience, and at peace with GOD, and is aſſured of his favour and friendſhip, of his providence and care, of his approbation and reward; this is a firm ground, not only of patience, but of joy to a good man, in the ſaddeſt and moſt diſmal condition he can fall into. "Unto "the upright (ſaith the pſalmiſt) there ariſeth light "in darkneſs," Pſal. cxii. 4. And no wonder, becauſe he that fears GOD, and ſerves him faithfully,

and

and ſuffers for him patiently, hath laid a ſure founda- SERM.
tion of comfort to himſelf, hath ſown the ſeeds of CLXXXVII.
contentment and peace, of joy and gladneſs in his own mind, which will ſpring up and flouriſh moſt, when we are in the moſt deſtitute and afflicted condition. "Light is ſown for the righteous, and glad-"neſs for the upright in heart," ſays David, Pſal. xcvii. 11. "The work of righteouſneſs ſhall be "peace, and the effect of righteouſneſs, quietneſs, "and aſſurance for ever," ſaith the prophet, Iſa. xxxii. 17.

And more eſpecially at the hour of death, then the comfort of a good man overflows, and "he lifts up "his head with joy, becauſe his redemption draweth "nigh:" then the reflexion upon a well-ſpent and unſpotted life, fills his ſoul with abundant conſolation, with "joy unſpeakable and full of glory;" for GOD, and the things of another world, appear more real and ſubſtantial to him, as he draws near to them, and his faith begins to be turned into ſight and fruition; he now ſtands upon the confines of both worlds, and diſcerns more clearly the vanity and emptineſs of that which he is going from, and the ſubſtantial and durable happineſs of that which he is entering into. Here is the trial of our faith, and the proof of religion, by the real fruits and effects of it, in the peace and comfort which it gives to a good man, when he is leaving this world; ſo that "when he walks "through the valley of death, he fears no ill," and his hopes are then moſt lively and vigorous, when he is ready to give up the ghoſt; the voice of nature, and of every man's reaſon and conſcience, as well as ſcripture, "ſays to the righteous, it ſhall be well with "him, for he ſhall eat the fruit of his doings; but

SERM. CLXXXVII. "wo unto the wicked, it ſhall be ill with him, for "the reward of his hands ſhall be given him." Which brings me to the

IId thing, namely, that impiety and wickedneſs is a real foundation of guilt and fear, of horror and deſpair, in the day of adverſity and affliction, and eſpecially in the approaches of death.

And how can it be otherwiſe, when all inward ſupport and comfort fail him, and all ſorts of evil and calamity inward and outward, aſſault him, and break in upon him at once? when the principles of infidelity fail him, and what he had made out ſo ſpeciouſly to himſelf, vaniſheth into nothing, "as a "dream when one awakens, and as a viſion in the "night?" for when any great calamity befals this man, GOD, "who was not before in all his thoughts," then begins to appear terrible to him, and he cannot baniſh the thoughts and fear of him out of his mind. But how uncomfortable is this, to be convinced there is a GOD, when a man hath moſt need of him, and can leaſt hope for his favour and pity?

But eſpecially at the approach of death, what a ſad preparation for that is an impious and wicked life? How does his conſcience then fly in his face, and how bitter is the remembrance of thoſe ſins which he committed with ſo much pleaſure and greedineſs? What a terror is the almighty to him, and the apprehenſion of that vengeance that threatens him, and that eternal miſery which is ready to ſwallow him up? And in the midſt of all this anguiſh and horror, which naturally ſpring from an evil conſcience, and the guilt of a wicked life, he is deſtitute of all comfort and hope; "he hath denied the GOD that is above," and now he dares not look up to him: his whole life

hath

hath been a continued affront of the divine majeſty, and an inſolent defiance of his juſtice; and what hopes can he now reaſonably have of his mercy? "of the "GOD that formed him, he hath been unmindful," and hath uſed him with all the deſpite he could; and therefore he hath all the reaſon in the world to conclude, that "he that made him will not ſave him, "and he that formed him will have no mercy on "him." And this is the natural conſequence of impiety and wickedneſs, it fills the ſoul of a dying ſinner with trouble and anguiſh, with guilt and deſpair, when he is leaving the world, and puts him into the moſt diſmal condition that can be imagined on this ſide hell, and very like to it, without comfort, and without hope. I proceed to the



Third and laſt thing I propoſed, viz. that if this be true, it is a demonſtration on the ſide of religion, and doth fully juſtify and acquit the wiſdom of it, and that upon theſe three accounts:

I. Becauſe the principles of religion, and the practice of them in a virtuous life, when they come to the laſt and utmoſt trial, do hold out, and are a firm and unſhaken foundation of peace and comfort to us.

II. That they miniſter comfort to us in the moſt needful and deſirable time.

III. That when men are commonly more ſerious, and ſober, and impartial, and when their declarations and words are thought to be of greateſt weight and credit, they give this teſtimony to religion and virtue, and againſt impiety and vice.

I. That the principles of religion, and the practice of them in a virtuous life, when they come to the laſt and utmoſt trial, do hold out, and are a firm and unſhaken foundation of peace and comfort to good

SERM. CLXXXVII.

men, at that time. The belief of a GOD, and of his providence and care of good men, and that "he is a rewarder of them that "diligently ſeek him;" the perſuaſion of our own immortality, and of the eternal recompence of another world; "that JESUS CHRIST came into "the world to ſave ſinners," and to purchaſe eternal life and happineſs for thoſe, who "by patient con-"tinuance in well-doing, ſeek for glory, and honour, "and immortality:" I ſay, the belief of theſe things, is commonly moſt ſtrong and vigorous in the minds of good men, when they come to die; and they have then a more clear apprehenſion, and firm perſuaſion of the truth and reality of theſe things, than ever they had in any time of their lives, and find more comfort from them, more peace and joy in the belief of them. And this is the great time of trial, when death preſents itſelf to us, and the terrors of it compaſs us about, whether upon occaſion of perſecution or ſickneſs. Theſe are "the rains, and "ſtorms, and winds," which will try upon what foundation our peace and comfort is built; and nothing but the principles of religion, ſincerely believed and practiſed, will make us firm and impregnable againſt theſe aſſaults. So our SAVIOUR aſſures us, Matth. vii. 24, 25. "whoſoever heareth theſe ſayings "of mine, and doth them," that is, believes and practiſeth my doctrine, "I will liken him to a wiſe man, "which built his houſe upon a rock, and the "rain deſcended, and the floods came, and the winds "blew, and beat upon that houſe, and it fell not, "for it was founded upon a rock."

And on the contrary, the principles of infidelity and vice, are moſt apt to ſhrink and give back at ſuch a time: nay, for the moſt part they vaniſh and diſappear,

diſappear, and upon the apprehenſion of death, a new light as it were ſprings up in their minds, and things appear quite contrary to that ſcheme which they had form'd, and which they had taken ſo much pains to maintain and make probable to themſelves; and that hypotheſis which they had been ſo long a building, appears now to have no foundation, and falls at once and all their hopes together with it. And now the infidel "believes and trembles," is ſenſible of his wicked life, and of the vengeance that hangs over him, and was never in his life half ſo well ſatisfied of the principles of infidelity, as he is now convinc'd of the contrary, to his infinite trouble and confuſion, that there is a GOD, and another life after this, and a terrible puniſhment to the workers of iniquity.

And daily experience confirms to us the certainty and truth of this matter, and that there is this difference for the moſt part very viſible in the temper and carriage of good and bad men, when they come to die.

II. The principles of religion and virtue do miniſter comfort to us in the moſt needful and deſirable times; and on the contrary, the principles of infidelity and vice do not only fail us in this day of diſtreſs, but give great trouble to us at the moſt unſeaſonable time.

And this makes a mighty difference between the condition of theſe two ſorts of perſons; for when would a man deſire to be at peace and quiet in his mind, but when his body is reſtleſs, and in pain? When would a man wiſh for "ſtrong conſolation "and hope," that "anchor of the ſoul, ſure and "ſtedfaſt," as the apoſtle to the Hebrews calls it, but in that laſt and terrible conflict of nature with

"the

SERM. CLXXVII. "the laſt of enemies," which is "death?" And when would a man dread trouble and anguiſh of mind, but at ſuch a time, when he is hardly able to ſuſtain his bodily pains and infirmities? If it be true of every day of our lives, "ſufficient for the day is "the evil thereof;" much more of the day of death: it is enough ſurely to have that one enemy to encounter, at which nature ſtartles, and our beſt reaſon can hardly furniſh us with force enough for the conflict, even when "the ſting of death" is taken away, I mean the guilt of an evil conſcience: but when all evils aſſail a man at once, pains without, and terrors within, a weak body, and "a wounded "ſpirit," an incurable diſeaſe, and intolerable deſpair, death ready to aſſault us, and hell following it, how unſeaſonable is the conjuncture of ſo many and ſo great evils? Wiſe men are wont to provide with great care againſt ſuch a time, that they may not be oppreſſed with too many troubles at once; and therefore in the time of their health, they ſettle their worldly concernments, and make their wills, that when ſickneſs or death comes, they may have no care upon them, nothing to do but to die. This is a time, when all the force of our reaſon, and all the comfort and hope that religion can give, will be little enough to give us a quiet and undiſturbed paſſage out of this world into the other: and we ſhall be very miſerable, if the terrors and ſtings of a guilty conſcience, and the pangs of death, do ſeize upon us at once. And therefore a wiſe man would make it the buſineſs of his whole life, to prevent this unhappy concurrence of evils, ſo unſupportable to humane nature; and to render death, which is grievous and terrible enough of itſelf, as comfortable and eaſy

as

as 'tis poſſible. For if there were nothing beyond this life, yet it were worth the while to provide for a quiet death; and if men were ſure to be poſſeſſed of theſe paſſions of hope and fear, of comfort and deſpair, which uſually attend good and bad men when they come to die, there is no man that calculates things wiſely, would, for all the pleaſures of ſin, forfeit the peace and comfort of a righteous ſoul, going out of the world full of the hopes of a bleſſed immortality; and endure the anguiſh and torment of a guilty conſcience, and the amazing terrors of a deſpairing and dying ſinner. This is a condition ſo ſad and fearful, that a wiſe man would avoid it upon any terms. SERM. CLXXXVII.

III. When men are commonly more ſerious, and ſober, and impartial, and their declarations and words are thought to be of greateſt weight and credit, they give this teſtimony to religion and virtue, and againſt impiety and vice.

It is generally ſeen, when men come to die, that the manner of their death is anſwerable to the courſe of their life; that the reflexion upon a holy and virtuous life, is a great eaſe and comfort to mens minds: and on the contrary, the guilt of a wicked life is apt to fly in their faces, and to diſturb their minds, and fill them with horror. And this is a critical time, when the conſciences of men are uſually awake, and apt to paſs an impartial judgment and cenſure upon themſelves. And for this, the infidel may believe one of his own great authors, I mean Lucretius, who obſerves, that when men are in diſtreſs and the apprehenſions of death are upon them, religion doth then ſhew its force.

*Acrius*

*Acriùs advertunt animos ad religionem,*

" The thoughts of it are then more pungent and " powerful upon their minds."

*Nam veræ voces tum demùm pectore ab imo*
*Eliciuntur, & eripitur perſona, manet res.*

" Mens words then come from the bottom of " their hearts, the maſk is taken off, and things then " appear to them as indeed they are."

Now, that when men are ſo impartial and in good earneſt, when they ſtand upon the confines of both worlds, and can view them at once, when they are leaving this world, and are now no longer in danger of being blinded or flattered, or tempted by it, and are juſt ready to paſs into the other world, and ſo much the more likely to diſcern the reality of it, as they approach near to it; I ſay, that in theſe circumſtances, men generally declare on the ſide of piety and virtue, and declaim moſt vehemently againſt their ſins and vices; that generally ſpeaking, and according to what is commonly ſeen in experience, the man who hath led a religious and virtuous life, is, when he comes to die, quiet and eaſy to himſelf, hath no regret at what he hath done, no ſevere and angry reflexions upon the ſtrict courſe of a virtuous life, his conſcience doth not accuſe or upbraid, or terrify him, for having lived " ſoberly, and righteouſly, " and godly in this world;" nay, ſo far from this, that if he hath any trouble, it is not becauſe he hath lived piouſly and virtuouſly, but becauſe he hath not lived more ſo, becauſe he hath come ſhort of his duty, and hath been ſo imperfectly and inconſtantly good: that generally dying men repent of their evil actions, and are troubled for them, but no man ever repented himſelf of ſerving God, and doing good.

This

This ſurely is a a great teſtimony on the ſide of religion and virtue, becauſe it is the teſtimony not only of the friends to religion, but of thoſe who have been the greateſt enemies to it, and at a time when they are moſt likely to declare the inward ſenſe of their minds, and to ſpeak moſt impartially, without deſign or diſguiſe, When the ungodly man and the ſinner comes to lie upon a death-bed, he hath then other apprehenſions of things than he had, or would own to have in the days of his health and proſperity, and his ſoul is full of ſadneſs and trouble, of perplexity and anguiſh, of fear and deſpair, becauſe of the wicked and lewd life which he hath led. But why art thou ſo diſmay'd, man? why ſo troubled and caſt down, ſo reſtleſs and unquiet, ſo wretched and miſerable in thine own thoughts? SER CLXX

If thou haſt done well in renouncing the principles of religion, and breaking looſe from all obligations of duty and conſcience, in gratifying thine inclinations and luſts, why art thou now troubled at it? If thou wert in the right all the while, why doſt thou not ſtand to it, and juſtify thy actings, and bear up like a man? If the principles thou wenteſt upon were ſound and firm, why doſt thou not ſtill take comfort and ſupport from them? Why does thy heart faint, and thy ſpirit ſink within thee? How comes thy imagination to be ſo diſturbed with ſuch frightful appearances, and to haunt thee continually with ſuch vain and groundleſs terrors? Whence is it that thoſe who have taken a contrary courſe, and lived a quite different life, have ſo much the advantage of thee, in the comfort, and peace, and tranquillity of their minds when they come to die?

But

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But if thou haſt been in the wrong, and doſt now diſcern real cauſe for ſo much trouble and fear, why doſt thou not conſider in time? why waſt thou not troubled ſooner, when trouble would have done thee good, and a great part of the anguiſh which thou now feeleſt, and all the miſery thou art ſo afraid of, might effectually have been prevented?

I think it is ſaid by thoſe who are concerned, to take off the force of this terrible objection againſt infidelity and a wicked life; that when men are in a dying condition, their ſpirits are low, and their underſtandings weak and diſturbed, and their minds thrown off the hinges; and therefore it is no wonder if they want that firmneſs and reſolution of ſpirit, that conſideration and courage, which they had in the time of their health.

This is ſpeciouſly ſaid, and with ſome ſhew and appearance of reaſon: but it does by no means anſwer, and take off the objection. For if this were a true reaſon at the bottom, why is it not true on both ſides? why are not both ſorts of men, when they are ſick and near to die, thoſe who have lived piouſly and virtuouſly, as well as the looſe and wicked livers, equally troubled? why are they not diſturbed and afraid alike? hath not ſickneſs the ſame natural effect upon them, and does it not equally weaken and diſorder their minds? But we ſee generally in experience, a plain and remarkable difference between theſe two ſorts of men, when they come to die; ſo plain, that it is not to be denied; and ſo remarkable, that there muſt be ſome conſiderable cauſe of it; and ſo general and conſtant, that it cannot without great folly and perverſeneſs be imputed to chance. Now what can we imagine

ſhould

d be the reaſon of this palpable difference be- SERM.
n good and bad men, when they are under the CLXXXVII.
henſions of death, but this, that a pious and
ous life is a real ground of peace and joy, of
ort and confidence at that time; and that im-
and wickedneſs are a real foundation of guilt
ear, of horror and deſpair in a dying hour:
word, that the different ways and courſes of good
ad men, do naturally lead to theſe different
and produce theſe different effects?

ther this muſt be granted, and then the whole
of infidelity and vice is yielded and given up
ce; or elſe men muſt fly to that which ſeems
oſt unreaſonable and extravagant paradox in
orld, and does effectually give up the cauſe
er way, viz. that a falſe opinion of things and
re deluſion, is more apt to ſupport the fainting
s of a dying man, and to give him more com-
nd hope in the day of diſtreſs, than a right
vell-grounded perſuaſion.

t this (as I ſaid before) does effectually give up
uſe another way: for if this be true, then cer-
they are righteſt that are in the wrong, and
on, though it were a miſtake, ought to be em-
d and entertained by a wiſe man, becauſe of
reat benefit and comfort of it. If this be truly
aſe, then every wiſe man muſt ſay, let me be
ceived; let it be my lot and portion, to live
ie in ſo pleaſant, and comfortable, and happy an
, as that of religion is.

that whether religion be true or falſe, it muſt,
ding to this reaſoning, be neceſſarily granted
: the only wiſe principle, and ſafe hypotheſis
man to live and die by. And this very thing

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that it is ſo, is a ſtrong evidence of the truth of religion, and even a demonſtration of the real excellency of virtue; becauſe no other ſuppoſition but that of religion, does ſo clearly ſolve all appearances, and ſo fully and exactly anſwer the natural deſires, and hopes, and fears of mankind. If the being of GOD, and the obligations of religion and virtue be admitted, this gives an eaſy account of the whole matter, and ſhews us that ſin and vice are the foundation of guilt and trouble; and that religion and virtue do naturally produce peace and comfort: for that is to be eſteemed and reckoned the natural effect of any thing which doth generally belong to the whole kind. If thoſe who live religiouſly and virtuouſly have generally peace and comfort when they come to die, and thoſe who live wickedly are commonly full of guilt and remorſe, of fear and perplexity at that time; this is reaſon enough to believe that theſe are the natural effects of thoſe cauſes: and that men when they come to die, are, according as they have lived, afraid of the divine juſtice, and of the vengeance of another world, or confident of GOD's goodneſs, and the rewards of another life, is a ſtrong argument of a ſuperior being that governs the world, and will reward men according to their works; becauſe no ſuppoſition but this doth anſwer the natural hopes and fears of men. And this likewiſe is an argument of the immortality of our ſouls, and of the rewards and puniſhments of another life; and as good a demonſtration of the reality and excellency of religion and virtue, from theſe happy effects of it, as the nature of the thing is capable of.

And now to make ſome reflexions upon what has been ſaid upon this argument.

First,

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Firſt, the conſideration of the different ends of good and bad men, is a mighty encouragement to piety and a good life. Nothing in this world ſhews us ſo remarkable a difference between the righteous and the wicked, as a death-bed. Then a good man moſt ſenſibly enjoys the comfort of a good life, and "the peaceable fruits of righteouſ-"neſs;" and the ſinner then begins to reap the bitter fruits of ſin. What a difference is there then, between the comfort and trouble, the compoſure and diſturbance, the hopes and fears of theſe two perſons? and next to the actual poſſeſſion of bleſſedneſs, the comfortable hopes and expectation of it are the greateſt happineſs; and next to being plung'd into it, the fearful apprehenſions of eternal miſery are the greateſt torment. "The wicked is driven "away in his wickedneſs," is violently hurried out of the world full of guilt and trouble. What ſtorms and tempeſts are then raiſed in his mind, from the fear of GOD's juſtice, and the deſpair of his mercy? but "the righteous hath hope in his death." The reflexion upon a holy and virtuous life, and the conſcience of a man's uprightneſs and ſincerity, are a ſpring of joy and peace to him, which refreſheth his mind with unſpeakable comfort and pleaſure, under the very pangs of death. With what triumph and exultation of ſpirit doth the bleſſed apoſtle St. Paul, upon the review of his labours and ſufferings for GOD and his truth, ſpeak of his diſſolution? 2 Tim. iv. 6, 7, 8. "For I am now ready to be "offered up, and the time of my departure is at "hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finiſhed "my courſe, I have kept the faith. Henceforth "there is laid up for me a crown of righteouſneſs,

SERM. CLXXXVII. "which the LORD, the righteous judge, shall "give me at that day." He speaks with such a lively sense of it, as if he had his crown in his view, and were just ready to take hold of it. And what would not a man give, what would he not be contented to do and suffer, to be thus affected, when he comes to leave the world, and to be able to bear the thoughts of his death and dissolution with so composed and chearful a mind? and yet this is the natural and genuine effect of a holy and useful life. And that which the same apostle tells us, was the ground of his rejoicing under sufferings, is likewise the comfort and support of good men at the time of their death, 2 Cor. i. 12. "Our rejoicing, saith "he, is this, the testimony of our conscience; that "in simplicity and godly sincerity, we have had "our conversation in the world." All the holy and virtuous actions of our lives, are so many seeds of peace and comfort to us at the hour of our death, which we shall more sensibly enjoy, when we come to depart this life. For then the consciences of men are apt to deal most freely and impartially with them; and "if our hearts do not then condemn "us, we may have comfort and confidence towards "GOD."

I believe there are some very pious and good souls, who have lived very disconsolate and full of doubtings, and been under a cloud the greatest part of their lives, who yet upon the approach of death, and just as they were leaving the world, have broken forth, as the sun sometimes doth just before his setting. I know it is not always thus; there are, I doubt not, some good men who go out of this world with little or no comfort; and yet so soon as they step

p into another world, are encompaſſed with "joy SERM.
unſpeakable and full of glory:" and though the CLXXXVII.
mfort of ſuch perſons be not ſo early and forward,
t it cannot chooſe but to be extremely welcome;
d it muſt needs put a doubting and trembling ſoul
o a ſtrange kind of extaſy and raviſhment, to be
s unexpectedly ſurpriſed with happineſs.

Secondly, ſince this is ſo great and evident a teſti-
ony of the truth and goodneſs of religion, is it not
trange thing, and to be wondered at, that true re-
ion and virtue ſhould be ſo little practiſed, and im-
y and vice ſhould ſo generally prevail in the
rld, againſt ſo many bars and obſtacles, and againſt
h invincible objections to the contrary? Not only
ainſt our inward judgment and conſcience, but
ainſt the general ſenſe and experience of men in all
s, the conſtant declarations and teſtimonies of dy-
men, both good and bad, when they are moſt ſe-
us, and their words are thought to be of greateſt
it and weight; againſt the beſt and ſobereſt rea-
of mankind, and their true intereſt and happi-
s; againſt the health of mens bodies, and, which
he moſt dear and valuable thing in the world, the
ce and quiet of their minds; and that not only in
time of life and health, but in the hour of death,
en men ſtand moſt in need of comfort and ſupport;
a word, againſt the grain of humane nature, and
deſpite of mens natural fears of divine vengeance,
l to the defeating of all our hopes of a bleſſed im-
tality in another world, and againſt the inflexible
ure and reaſon of things, by no art or endeavour
man, by no colours of wit, or ſubtilty of diſcourſe,
no practice or cuſtom to the contrary, by no con-
acy and combination of men, ever to be changed

SERM. CLXXXVII. or altered? So that we may ſay with David, "Have "all the workers of wickedneſs no knowledge," no conſideration of themſelves, no tenderneſs and regard to their preſent and future intereſt? Nay, if there were no life after this, ſetting aſide the caſe of extreme ſuffering and perſecution, religion and virtue are certainly to be choſen, not only for our contentment in life, but for our comfort in death: and if there be a ſtate of happineſs or miſery remaining for men after death, as moſt aſſuredly there is, much more in order to the attaining of that endleſs happineſs, and the avoiding of that eternal and intolerable miſery. "O that men were wiſe, that they under- "ſtood this, and would conſider their latter end!"

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# SERMON CLXXXVIII.

## The uſefulneſs of conſidering our latter end.

PSAL. XC. 12.

*So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wiſdom.*

SERM. CLXXXVIII. THE title of this pſalm tells us who was the author of it. It is called "a prayer of "Moſes the man of GOD;" or as the Chaldee paraphraſe more expreſly, "The prayer which "Moſes, the prophet of the LORD, prayed, when "the people of the houſe of Iſrael ſinned in the wil- "derneſs." Upon which provocation of theirs, GOD

in

in great diſpleaſure threatened, and was immutably reſolved that they ſhould all periſh in the wilderneſs, and that none of the men that came out of Egypt, Caleb and Joſhua only excepted, ſhould enter into the promiſed land, but ſhould all die in the ſpace of forty years. SERM. CLXXXVIII

Upon this occaſion, Moſes made this pſalm or prayer to GOD, being a devout meditation upon the ſhortneſs and frailty of human life, which was now brought into a much narrower compaſs than in former ages. But the caſe of that people was different from that of the reſt of mankind, being limited and confined to forty years. They might die ſooner than that time; but that was the utmoſt bound of their lives, which none were to exceed; which ſeems to be the ground and reaſon of the petition which Moſes puts up to GOD in the text, "So teach us," &c.

For I do not think that Moſes does here beg of GOD, to reveal to every one of them the preciſe end and term of his life; that might ſeem to ſavour of too much preſumption or curioſity: but ſince they knew that according to the ordinary courſe of nature, the life of man was then reduced to "threeſcore and "ten, or fourſcore years;" and ſince GOD by a peremptory ſentence had pronounced, that, two perſons only excepted, all that vaſt number which came out of Egypt, and even Moſes himſelf ſhould die within the compaſs of forty years; it was a very pious and proper requeſt, which Moſes here puts up for himſelf and the reſt of that people, that GOD would give them wiſdom to make a right uſe of the notice which they had of their end, ſince it might happen at any time, but could not reach beyond forty years, reckoning from the time of their coming out of Egypt.

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To know the determinate time of our life, or to know certainly that our life ſhall not exceed ſuch a term (which was the caſe of the Iſraelites in the wilderneſs) is a very awakening thing, and does commonly rouſe men more than the general conſideration of our own frailty and mortality. And yet to a wiſe and conſiderate man, it ought in reaſon to be the ſame: for that which will certainly be, ought to be reckoned upon and provided for; and if it be uncertain when it will be, whether at ſome diſtance, or the next moment, we ought preſently to take care about it, and to be always in a readineſs for it, leſt we ſhould be ſurpriſed and overtaken.

And then this prayer is as proper for us, as it was for Moſes and the Iſraelites, tho' we are not juſt under the ſame circumſtances that they were. They were under a peremptory ſentence of death within "forty years," and none of them knew how much ſooner they might be taken away: and this is not much different from our caſe; for we are liable to death at any time, every day, every moment; and how few of us in this congregation can reaſonably either hope, or expect to have our lives prolonged beyond the term of "forty years?" nay, it is very probable, that not one of us in an hundred will hold out ſo long. And then this prayer may be as fit for us, as it was for Moſes and the Iſraelites, that GOD would "teach us ſo to number our days," that is, to make ſuch an account of the ſhortneſs and uncertainty of our lives, and ſo to conſider and lay to heart our latter end, "that we may apply our "hearts unto wiſdom;" that is, that we may manage and conduct this frail, and ſhort, and uncertain life, in the beſt manner, and to the wiſeſt purpoſes.

And

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And this consideration of our latter end was always esteemed by the wisest men, a principal part and main point of wisdom. Socrates, who was by the general consent of wise men (a more infallible oracle, than that of Apollo) esteemed the wisest of all the philosophers, gives us this definition of philosophy, that "it is the meditation or study of death;" to intimate to us, that this is true wisdom, to be much in the thought of our latter end, and in a constant readiness and preparation for it. And this a greater than Socrates had long before him observed to be a chief point of wisdom, I mean Moses the man of GOD, that divine person and prince of the ancient prophets, not only in this psalm, but also in his last divine song, a little before his death, in which he makes this the sum of all his wishes for the people of Israel, that GOD would endow them with this high point of wisdom, Deut. xxxii. 29. "O that they were wise, that they understood this, "that they would consider their latter end!" This is true wisdom and philosophy, "to consider "our latter end."

And this, by GOD's assistance, shall be the argument which I intend to handle from these words; namely, to shew what influence and effect the serious consideration of our latter end, and of the shortness and uncertainty of this present life, ought in reason to have upon us. And of this I shall give you an account in these following particulars:

I. The meditation of our latter end should make us to take into consideration our whole lives, and our whole duration, that we may resolve and act accordingly. And this is a main point of wisdom, to understand ourselves, and the nature of our be-

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ings, of what we conſiſt, and for what duration we are deſigned; whether we conſiſt only of matter a little better faſhioned and moulded, and made up into a more curious and complicated engine, conſiſting of many ſecret and hidden ſprings and wheels, and fitted for greater variety of motions, and for more fine and ſubtile operations, than the bodies of thoſe other creatures which we eſteem below us: or whether we be endowed with a ſpiritual principle, wholly diſtinct from matter, and capable not only of ſenſe, but of acts of reaſon, and of the impreſſions of religion, from the apprehenſions of a deity and a ſuperior being that is of itſelf, and made us and all other things. In a word, whether we ſhall "die like beaſts;" or whether there be "an immortal ſpirit within us," which hath no dependence upon matter and the bodily and viſible part of ourſelves, but is "a much better and enduring "ſubſtance," which hath no principle of corruption in itſelf, but ſhall ſurvive theſe periſhing bodies, and when they are mouldered into duſt, ſhall ſubſiſt in a happy or miſerable condition, according as we have behaved ourſelves in this world.

For theſe are two very different hypotheſes and ſchemes of things, and ought to affect us very differently, and to inſpire us with different reſolutions, and to put us upon a quite contrary method and conduct of our lives.

For on the one hand, if we be well aſſured, that we ſhall be utterly extinguiſhed by death, "like "the beaſts that periſh," then we have nothing to care of but of our bodies, becauſe we are nothing elſe; then we need not to extend our thoughts, our hopes, or fears, beyond this world, and this preſent life.

life; becauſe we have nothing to do, but to pleaſe ourſelves with preſent enjoyments, and to live ſo with other men, as may make moſt for our temporal quiet, and ſatisfaction, and ſecurity. SERM. CLXXXVIII

But then we are to conſider very well, whether theſe things be certainly ſo, and whether we may rely upon it, and whether it will bear all that weight which we lay upon it; whether theſe principles will not fail us, when we come moſt to ſtand in need of the comfort and ſupport of them, and when death is in view, and making up towards us, quite vaniſh and diſappear: becauſe it is of infinite conſequence to us, to be well aſſured of this, ſince our happineſs or miſery to all eternity depends upon it. And therefore nothing leſs than a demonſtration of the impoſſibility of the thing, of our having immortal ſpirits that ſhall ſurvive our bodies, and ſubſiſt apart from them, and be extremely miſerable or happy in another world; I ſay, nothing but a demonſtration of the impoſſibility of this, ought to be ſatisfaction to us in a caſe of ſo great danger, and upon which ſo much does depend.

Fo if there be a poſſibility on the other ſide, of our having immortal ſouls, which ſhall live for ever in another world, nothing can acquit us from the greateſt imprudence, if we ſhould neglect to take care of that better and more laſting part of ourſelves, and to provide for that duration which ſhall never have an end.

And therefore if the ſuppoſition of the ſoul's immortality be infinitely more probable, as better agreeing with all the notions which men have of God and his providence, and with the natural deſires, and hopes, and fears of mankind, and as moſt ſuitable

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ſuitable to all our capacities and expectations, and to the general opinion and conſent of wiſe men in all ages; then it is infinitely more ſafe, and conſequently more wiſe, to proceed upon this ſuppoſition, and to provide and act accordingly.

Thus "to number our days," that is, to make ſuch an account of the ſhortneſs and uncertainty of this life, as to employ it mainly in the care and preparation for a better life, will engage us effectually in the buſineſs of religion. And this, perhaps, is the meaning of this phraſe in the text, of "applying our hearts to wiſdom," according to that of Job, Job xxviii. 28. "But unto man he ſaid, behold the fear of the LORD, that is wiſdom;" as if he had ſaid, this is the true wiſdom, the great excellency and perfection of humane nature is religion, the lively ſenſe and firm belief of a deity, and a carriage and demeanour ſuitable to that belief; and that man is well taught, and rightly inſtructed in the great buſineſs and concernment of this life, and makes a wiſe reckoning and account of the ſhortneſs and uncertainty of it, who applies himſelf to the buſineſs of religion: for this is the fundamental principle of wiſdom, by which our whole life, and all the actions of it, ought to be governed and conducted.

So that if we have immortal ſpirits, which ſhall live and continue for ever; we cannot in reaſon but take our whole life and our whole duration into conſideration. And if we do ſo, we can never juſtify it to ourſelves, to employ all our care and time about the worſt and more ignoble part of ourſelves, and to make proviſion only for the few days of our pilgrimage here in this world, without any regard to that eternal

eternal duration, which we ſhall have in another world. SERM. CLXXXVIII

The ſerious conſideration of this cannot fail to make us careful of our ſouls, and concern'd for eternity; and in order to the ſecuring the happineſs of that ſtate, to mind us "to work out our ſalvation" with great care and diligence; that if it be poſſible, we may avoid the miſery, and obtain the happineſs of another world; becauſe there is no compariſon between the goods and evils of this life, and thoſe of the other, neither in reſpect of the degree, nor of the duration of them. And therefore it muſt needs be great wiſdom, to forego the good things of this life, to obtain thoſe of the other; and to bear the evils and afflictions of this life, to eſcape thoſe of the other. For what man in his wits, for a temporal convenience and ſatisfaction, would forfeit an eternal benefit and advantage; and to eſcape a preſent evil, which cannot laſt long, would run himſelf upon one infinitely greater, and which will laſt for ever?

"Conſider then, and ſhew yourſelves men." Can there be a greater overſight and miſcarriage in the conduct of our affairs, than to mind that leaſt which concerns us moſt? Is it poſſible for men to run into a greater miſtake than to think, that their great buſineſs in this world, is to mind the things of this world? and yet the greateſt part of mankind not only run into this miſtake at their firſt ſetting out, but perſiſt in it all their days; as if their great and indeed their only concernment were to pleaſe themſelves for the preſent, and to provide for this world, as if they were to live always in it: forgetting all this while, that they have immortal ſouls, which ſhall ſurvive

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their bodies, and after a time be reunited to them, to live for ever, deprived of that happineſs which they would take no care to ſecure, and undergoing that miſery and puniſhment, which they would be at no pains to prevent whilſt they were in this world, and the opportunity of ſecuring the one, and avoiding the other, was in their hands.

II. The thoughts of our latter end ſhould make us very ſerious and compoſed in our ſpirits. For if we have immortal ſouls as well as dying bodies; if we ſhall live for ever, and if the happineſs of all eternity depends upon the improvement of this ſhort time of our lives, and our carriage and demeanour while we are here in this world; then it is no trifling buſineſs, it is not a matter of ſmall concernment to us how we live here, and manage ourſelves during our abode in this world.

Whom do not the lively thoughts of death, and the near approach of it make grave and ſerious? and many men, much wiſer and more conſiderate than ever they were in any other time of their lives, and much truer judges of things. They can then tell how they ought to have lived, what uſe they ſhould have made of their time, and what uſe they would make of it, if GOD would be pleaſed to prolong it to them.

The near view of another world is an amazing thing, and apt to inſpire men with better thoughts and reſolutions than ever they had before. And why ſhould not the clear proſpect of it at a diſtance, and the aſſur'd belief of it, have the ſame effect upon us, to make us ſerious, and to mind in good earneſt, "in this our day, the things which belong to our "peace," and "to wait all the days of our appointed "time, till our change ſhall come? And

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And therefore to engage us to a continual ſeriouſneſs and watchfulneſs, the great judge of the world hath hid from us both the time of the general judgment, and of our particular ſummons out of this world, that we might never be unprovided for the main chance, for that which may happen at any time, and which will concern us for ever.

III. The meditation of our latter end ſhould put us upon minding the great buſineſs of our lives with all our might, and make us very vigorous and induſtrious in it; I mean the buſineſs of religion, and the ſalvation of our ſouls. And if we ſet up this, as in reaſon we ought, for the great end and deſign of our lives, and the main ſcope of all our actions, it will make our lives of a piece, and every part thereof agreeable to itſelf; becauſe our mind will ſtand continually bent one way, and all our thoughts, and cares, and endeavours, will be united in one great end and deſign.

And it will oblige us to great diligence and induſtry, and make us work hard, to think how great a work we have to do, and how little time to do it in, perhaps much leſs than moſt of us do imagine. It is not an eaſy work for a man to become good, and fit for heaven; it requires time and care, and great watchfulneſs over ourſelves, great ſtrugglings, and many a conflict with the evil inclinations of our minds, which, after we have conquered them, will often rally and make head again; a ſtout reſiſtance of temptations, a ſtiff and obſtinate reſolution not to yield to them, and "a patient continuance in well-"doing." The conſideration whereof ſhould make us very careful and diligent to get "oil into our "lamps;" that is, all thoſe graces and virtues, all

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thoſe good diſpoſitions which may fit us for another world, and prepare us for eternity; it ſhould make us very vigorous and induſtrious to do all the good we can, while the opportunity of doing it is in our hands, and to make ourſelves as good as we can, becauſe this is the time and ſeaſon of laying the foundation of our future happineſs, and increaſing the degrees of it; for "as we ſow, ſo ſhall we "reap; he that ſows ſparingly, ſhall reap ſparingly; "and he that ſows plentifully, ſhall reap plentifully." Every degree of virtue and goodneſs that we attain to in this world, will meet with a ſuitable reward, and a more reſplendent degree of glory and happineſs in the next life.

And we ſhall have this advantage by a great induſtry and diligence in "working out our own ſal-"vation," that if we have made religion the great care and buſineſs of our lives, we ſhall have nothing to do when we come to die, but to renew our repentance for the errors and miſcarriages of our lives, and to beg GOD's pardon and forgiveneſs of them, for the ſake of the meritorious obedience and ſufferings of our bleſſed SAVIOUR; to comfort ourſelves in the goodneſs and promiſes of GOD, and in the glorious hopes of the happineſs which we are ready to enter upon and in the mean time to exerciſe fairly and patience for a very little while, till death put an end to the ſorrows and miſeries of life.

IV. The meditation of our latter end ſhould make us much in the exerciſe of repentance, and to renew it frequently; becauſe we continually offend GOD, and provoke him every day, if not by ſins of commiſſion, yet of omiſſion and neglect in one kind or other, and by the imperfection of our beſt actions

s and ſervices; if not by preſumptuous ſins and SERM.
t knowledge, yet by manifold ſins of igno- CLXXXVIII.
and infirmity; ſo that the beſt of us may ſay
David every day, "who can underſtand his er-
s? cleanſe thou me from ſecret ſins. If thou
uldſt be extreme to mark what is done amiſs,
LORD, who can ſtand?"

us by exerciſing a daily, or at leaſt a very fre-
repentance, we may keep our accounts in a good
re even, and not be in a hurry and confuſion
we come to die, neither knowing where to be-
ur repentance, nor how to go through with
at a work in ſo ſhort a time, and in circum-
s of ſo much weakneſs and diſtraction. There
rdly any of us, eſpecially of us who are mini-
and have frequent occaſion to attend upon
ds, but have ſeen ſeveral in theſe wretched
ſtances, not knowing what to do, deſirous to
, but what through weakneſs of body, and
and confuſion of mind, not knowing how to
ut it, lamenting their neglect of it in the time
r health, and deſpairing of doing it now with
ceſs and acceptance. Theſe are ſad ſpectacles
, and ought to be loud warnings to us who
health, and have the opportunity of repen-
before us, to make uſe of it, and to ſet about
ceſſary work out of hand, "to day, while it
alled to day, leſt any of us be hardened through
deceitfulneſs of ſin," and be at laſt brought
oſe miſerable ſtraits which I have been de-
, and which no man that underſtands him-
uld be in for all the world.

The meditation of the ſhortneſs and uncertainty
ſhould make us great huſbands of our time,

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as that which next to our immortal ſouls, and for the ſake of them, is the moſt precious and valuable thing in the world. For as on the one hand, nothing will comfort us more when we come to die and leave this world, than the remembrance of a well-ſpent life, carefully employed in the ſervice of GOD, and for the benefit and advantage of men; ſo on the other hand, there is nothing for which our conſciencies will more bitterly reproach us at that time, and fly in our faces with greater fury and rage, than for an uſeleſs and unprofitable, eſpecially if it have been likewiſe (as is too commonly ſeen) a wicked and vicious life.

Our life is uncertain, and therefore we ſhould ſeize the preſent time, and improve it to the beſt advantage, tho' it be but ſhort in itſelf, and very ſhort in reſpect of the great and long work which we have to do in it. To prevent or cure the manifold diſtempers of our minds, and to preſerve our ſouls in a good ſtate of health, and to keep them free from the diſorders of our appetites and paſſions, requires a wiſe conduct, and a very careful management of ourſelves. Evil and inveterate habits are not maſter'd and mortify'd in an inſtant; nor the contrary virtues attained in any meaſure of perfection but by long practice and ſlow degrees. There muſt be time, and patience, and perſeverance, for the doing of theſe things, and we muſt "give all diligence to "add to our faith knowledge, and to our know-"ledge virtue," and one virtue to another, and one degree of virtue to another; and nothing without this can miniſter true comfort to us in the hour of death, and make us "to lift up our heads with joy "in the day of judgment."

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The conſideration of this ſhould make us careful, SERM. not to neglect any occaſion of doing good, or of CLXXXVIII making ourſelves better; and reſtrain us from allowing too much of our time to thoſe great waſters and devourers of it, diverſions and viſits; becauſe they do not only hinder us from better work and employment, but are apt inſenſibly to work us off from that ſerious temper of mind, which becomes thoſe who do in good earneſt deſign for another world.

VI. The meditation of our latter end ſhould make us always to prefer the doing of our duty, and the keeping of a good conſcience, to all temporal conſiderations whatſoever, whether of fame, and the good opinion of men, or of wealth and riches, of honour and dignity, of authority and power, "chooſing rather with Moſes, to ſuffer afflictions with "the people of GOD, than to have the temporary "enjoyments of ſin."

And as for pleaſure, there is little in this world that is true and ſincere, beſides the pleaſure of doing our duty, and of doing good; I am ſure none that is comparable to it. A good conſcience is "a con"tinual feaſt," and he certainly pleaſeth himſelf beſt, and is moſt eaſy in his own mind, who is conſcious to himſelf, that he endeavours as well as he can to do what he ought.

VII. The meditation of our mortality ſhould teach us the true price and value of all temporal enjoyments, and make us duly affected towards them, and to ſit as looſe to them in our affections as we can; for nothing ſurely can be more apt to beget in us a coldneſs and indifferency towards the enjoyments of this world, than the conſideration of the uncertainty of

SERM. CLXXXVIII all theſe things, and of the ſhortneſs, and uncertainty of our own lives.

Or if we ſuppoſe that they and we both ſhould continue for ſome number of years, yet there will be an end of them or us; and nothing is to be reckon'd a laſting happineſs that will have an end, tho' it ſhould be long firſt; for where there can be either ſorrow or an end of our joy, there can be no true felicity.

Beſides, that the nature of the things of this world is ſuch, that they afford but little happineſs to us whilſt we have them; we cannot do well without them, and yet we can hardly do well with them. Moſt of the enjoyments of this world, as deſirable as they are to us, are very dangerous, and are always attended with ſome inconvenience or other; and even when we have all that we can wiſh for in this world, we are apt to be ſtill uneaſy, either ſomething troubles us, or nothing pleaſes us; we are pained with fulneſs, and cloyed with the long enjoyment of the beſt things this world can give us. Why then ſhould we ſet ſuch an high and unreaſonable value upon theſe temporary enjoyments, and be ſo much concerned for thoſe things, of which we have ſo ſlippery a hold and ſo ſlender an aſſurance, and which afford us ſo very little contentment and ſatisfaction when we have them, and yet give us ſo much grief and trouble when we loſe them? conſidering how ſoon we muſt, and how ſuddenly we may leave this world, and all the enjoyments of it, we ought in reaſon to ſet no great price upon them.

VIII. The conſideration of the ſhortneſs and uncertainty of our lives, ſhould make us contented with our preſent condition, and patient under all the evils and afflictions which may befal us in this world.

A little may content us for a little while, for the ſhort time of our abode here; and ſince we do not expect our reſt and happineſs in this world, we cannot think ourſelves diſappointed, if we do not meet with it. If our condition be tolerable, it is well, and we have reaſon to be contented with it, ſince it is as much as this world uſually affords. If it be very mean and ſtrait, it cannot laſt long; and even that conſideration ſhould ſilence our murmurings, and ſhould reſtrain and check our diſcontent. SERM. CLXXXVIII

And it ſhould make us patient likewiſe under the greateſt evils and afflictions of this preſent life, to conſider that they will ſhortly have an end; either they will give off of themſelves, or they will carry us off and make an end of us, and all the patience we have exerciſed will be rewarded far beyond the proportion of our ſufferings.

At the worſt, the afflictions and ſufferings of this preſent time are not like the troubles and miſeries of the other world, they will not laſt always. The moſt grievous things that can befal us here are not like the torments of hell, neither for the degree, nor the duration of them, without intermiſſion and without end.

IX. The meditation of death, and of the conſequences of it, ſhould make us upright and ſincere in all our words and actions. Hypocriſy and diſſimulation, as much as they are practiſed, are no part of true wiſdom, no, not as to this world; they recoil terribly upon men, and turn to their reproach and diſadvantage ſo ſoon as they are diſcerned, and they cannot be long practiſed without being diſcover'd. But if we regard the other world, all diſguiſes and arts of deceit are perfect folly; becauſe then, "God will

SER. M. CLXXXVIII. "bring every work into judgment, and every ſecret "thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil," as Solomon aſſures us, Eccleſ. xii. 14. And our bleſſed SAVIOUR cautions us againſt hypocriſy, upon this conſideration, that there is a day coming, when all the falſe pretences of men ſhall be expoſed and laid open, and all thoſe maſks and vizors which men wear in this world will fall off, and the actions of men ſhall appear in their true colours, Luke xii. 1, 2. "Beware, ſays our SAVIOUR there firſt of all, "of the leaven of the Phariſees, which is hypocriſy: "for there is nothing cover'd, that ſhall not be re- "vealed; nor hid, that ſhall not be known."

Laſtly, the meditation of our latter end ſhould put us upon a careful, and continual, and particular preparation for the time of our death and diſſolution. And this is very well worth our while; and the ſooner we ſet about it, the better: becauſe, when this work is in any good meaſure done, we have reſcued ourſelves from that "bondage," to which moſt men are all their life long "ſubject," becauſe of the continual "fear of death." Nothing abates the terror of death, like a due preparation for it. When this is once made, we cannot be much concerned when it comes; for to a well-prepared mind, ſooner or later makes no great difference: but if we have delayed this neceſſary work, the longer we have delayed it, the more unfit we ſhall be for it, and the more unwilling to ſet about it; and if neceſſity drives us to it at laſt, we ſhall find that old age and ſickneſs are but bad times to make preparation for death in, to begin our repentance and the change of a bad life. He that prepares not for death, before he draws near to it, and comes to lie upon a ſick-bed, is like him that begins to ſtudy the art of

navigation, when he hath preſent occaſion and uſe for the ſkill which he hath not yet learned, when his veſſel is driven among rocks, and is every moment in danger of being daſh'd in pieces. SERM. CLXXXVIII

Let this then be eſtabliſh'd for a firm principle and rule, that the beſt and ſureſt preparation for a happy and comfortable death, is a holy and good life. For nothing will diſarm death of its terrors, like the conſcience of our own innocency, and of a ſincere deſire and endeavour to pleaſe GOD in the general courſe and tenour of our lives, and of a ſincere repentance for all the errors and miſcarriages of our lives. And though our life be ſhort and uncertain, yet it is a great deal that we may do by way of preparation for another world, if we begin and ſet out betimes, and be good huſbands of the preſent opportunities. It is a great way that we may go in a ſhort time, if we be always moving and preſſing forwards.

But the miſchief is, many men paſs fifty or ſixty years in the world, and when they are juſt going out of it, they bethink themſelves and ſtep back as it were, to do ſomething which they had all this while forgot, viz. the main buſineſs for which they come into the world, to repent of their ſins and reform their lives, and make their peace with GOD, and in time to prepare for eternity. This, which is forgotten and deferr'd to the laſt, ought to have been firſt thought of, and to have been made the great buſineſs of their whole lives.

But I proceed to give ſome more particular directions concerning our preparation for death; namely,

1. By frequent meditation of it, which will render it more familiar to us, and help us to tame this monſter, and to take off the dread of it; and therefore

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we ſhould accuſtom ourſelves to the thoughts of it, that we may in ſome meaſure be reconciled to it.

2. We ſhould endeavour to mitigate the evil and terror of death, by thinking of ſomething worſe, I mean the evils and miſeries of life. For when we once come to look upon death as a remedy of all the evils of life, we ſhall then begin to be reconciled to it; and if we be wiſe, ſhall be glad to be out of the noiſe, and danger, and ſuffering of ſo many evils as we are continually liable to in this world; and ſhall thank GOD heartily for diſmiſſing us, and giving us leave to die, and by death to put an end to this miſerable life, and to begin a better and happier life, which ſhall never have an end.

And we ſhould likewiſe meditate much on the glory and happineſs of another world. For if we be once poſſeſs'd with a firm belief and perſuaſion of it, we ſhall think the time long that we are detained from it, and wiſh for that which we ſo much feared, I mean death, that it may bring us to the enjoyment of that which we have much more reaſon to deſire.

And indeed conſidering (as I ſaid before) the many evils and miſeries which we are liable to and always in danger of, while we are in this world, we have cauſe to thank GOD that we were born to die, and that we are not condemned to live for ever in this world. So that whenever GOD ſhall think fit to releaſe us, we ought to eſteem it a favour: but if he will have us to ſtay a little longer, we muſt with patience wait for another opportunity of making our eſcape out of an evil and troubleſome world. But methinks we ſhould not much deſire to ride it out in the ſtorm any longer, when the port is open, and we may ſafely enter in. And then,

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8. By way of farther preparation for death, we ſhould endeavour to maintain always a lively ſenſe of it in our minds, that we may be, to all good effects and purpoſes, as much under the power of it as if it were juſt approaching, as if the phyſician or the judge had paſt the ſentence of death upon us. We ſhould always reckon upon that which may happen the next moment; and if we do ſo, we can never be extremely ſurpriſed; but "whenever our LORD comes, "ſhall be found watching." And,

Laſtly, we ſhould make it our conſtant prayer to GOD, that he would fit us for our diſſolution, and ſtand by us and comfort us in that needful time, without whoſe gracious ſupport and aſſiſtance, both phyſicians and even the miniſters of GOD themſelves, are but "miſerable comforters." It ſhould be our daily petition to GOD, that he would enable us to perform this laſt act of our life with decency and conſtancy of mind, that neither our diſeaſe nor our weakneſs may break the firmneſs of our ſpirits, or leave us to be amazed with fear, or betrayed with peeviſhneſs, ſo as to render us uneaſy to ourſelves, or to make our friends willing to be rid of us.

But more eſpecially, when GOD thinks fit, either by the nature or preſent danger of our diſtemper, to give us a nearer ſummons and clearer warning of our mortality, we ſhould take the opportunity to impreſs upon our minds a deep and more lively ſenſe of another world, that we may quicken our peace, and "work the work of him that ſent us into the world, "while it is day; becauſe the night is coming when "no man can work."

Nature I know is fond of life, and apt to be ſtill longing after a longer continuance here, and to find

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Let us then be of good courage in the approaches of death, ſince we ſee land, and the ſtorm which we are in will quickly be over; and then it will be as if it had never been, or rather the remembrance of it will be a great pleaſure to us.

*Suave mari magno, turbantibus æquora ventis,*
*E terrâ alterius magnum ſpectare periclum,*
*Non quia vexari quendam eſt jucunda voluptas;*
*Sed quibus ipſe malis careas quia cernere ſuave eſt.*

"It is a pleaſant thing to ſtand upon the ſhore, "when we ſee others in a great ſtorm at ſea. Not "that it is delightful to ſee others in danger; but "when others are in great difficulties and dangers, "it is a pleaſure to find ourſelves ſafe and out of "danger."

And if it ſhould pleaſe GOD to exerciſe us with great pains or tedious ſickneſs, we ſhould make uſe of all the conſiderations which reaſon and religion do furniſh us withal, to help to mitigate and deceive our troubles, and to make that ſhort way a little more ſmooth and eaſy. For the beſt of us have no privilege and exemption from the common accidents of humanity, no piety can certainly ſecure to any of us an eaſy and comfortable death; and therefore it is a groundleſs confidence for any man to reckon upon it;

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we muſt in this, as in all other things, reſign up ourſelves to GOD's good pleaſure, and ſubmit to him the time and manner, and all other circumſtances of our departure out of this world; whether our ſun ſhall ſet in a cloud, or ſhine brighteſt and look biggeſt when it is going down. But however it ſets, it is the ſun ſtill, and the fountain of light, and will riſe glorioufly. There are always the ſeeds of joy and comfort in the conſcience of a good man; and though they be hid and buried for a while, they will ſpring forth one time or other. "Light is "ſown for the righteous, and gladneſs for the up-"right in heart," as David aſſures us, Pſal. xcvii. 11. I will conclude all with the words of the author of this pſalm, Deut. xxxii. 29. "O that they "were wiſe, that they underſtood this, that they "would conſider their latter end."

# SERMON CLXXXIX.

## The life of JESUS CHRIST conſidered, as our example.

1 PET. ii. 21.

*—Leaving us an example, that ye ſhould follow his ſteps.*

THE apoſtle here propounds to chriſtians the example of our SAVIOUR, as an argument to perſuade them to one particular grace and virtue, namely, patience under ſufferings unjuſtly laid upon us, ver. 19, 20, 21. "For this is "thank-

SERM. CLXXXIX. The firſt ſermon on this text.

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"thank worthy, if a man for conſcience toward "GOD endure grief, ſuffering wrongfully. For "what glory is it, if when ye be buffetted for "your faults, ye ſhall take it patiently? but if "when ye do well, and ſuffer for it, ye take it "patiently; this is acceptable with GOD. For even "hereunto were ye called: becauſe CHRIST alſo "ſuffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye "ſhould follow his ſteps."

But though the example of our SAVIOUR be here propounded to us upon a particular occaſion, and with a more eſpecial regard to the particular virtue of patience under unjuſt ſufferings, which did ſo eminently appear in our bleſſed SAVIOUR, the moſt meek and patient endurer that ever was, of the greateſt and moſt wrongful ſufferings; yet the apoſtle does not limit this great pattern of all righteouſneſs to the ſingle virtue of patience, but propounds it to us, as an example of univerſal holineſs and goodneſs; for ſo he extends it in the next words, "leaving us an example, that ye ſhould follow his "ſteps, who did no ſin, neither was guile found in "his mouth."

In this latitude and extent I ſhall diſcourſe of it at this time, and that under theſe following heads;

I. That his life is a moſt abſolute and perfect pattern.

II. That it is a very eaſy and familiar example.

III. Very encouraging to the imitation of it.

IV. An univerſal pattern fitted for the imitation of all ſorts of perſons, of what rank or condition ſoever.

V. In the nature of it very powerful to engage and oblige men to the imitation of it.

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. The life of our bleſſed SAVIOUR is a moſt
olute and perfect pattern of holineſs and goodneſs,
plete and entire in all its parts, and perfect to
utmoſt degree, in the following whereof there is
danger of being miſguided, no fear of miſcarri-
: whereas all other examples of mortal men are
ible and uncertain guides, which if we follow too
ely, will ſometime or other miſlead us. In the
s of the beſt men recorded in ſcripture, we may
ern ſome ſpot and blemiſh, ſome error and over-
t, ſome fall or ſlip; ſo that the lives of the ho-
: men are no ſure rule, no perfect meaſure of our
y, and are therefore to be imitated with great
lom and warineſs, leſt we follow all their actions
fferently and implicitly, in confidence they are
d, becauſe they are theirs, we may fall into great
rs and failings; and therefore in following the
s and examples of the beſt men, we muſt have
eye to the rule, and by that judge of the
mple which we propoſe to imitate; otherwiſe we
eaſily be ſeduced by the authority of a great
mple.

But the example of our LORD is a living law
rule, his precepts and pattern are of equal per-
ion, and the imitation of his life and actions, is
very ſame thing with obedience to his laws. For
life of our bleſſed SAVIOUR here on earth, is
life of GOD in the nature and likeneſs of man;
was GOD as well as man, and the divine nature
rtainly the pattern of all perfection. As he was
SON of GOD, he was "the brightneſs of his
FATHER'S glory, and the expreſs image and
haracter of his perſon;" and as he was the SON
nan, though he had natural frailties and infirmi-

ties,

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ties, and was ſubject to hunger and thirſt, wearineſs and pain, like other men; yet he had all the moral perfections belonging to humane nature, without any of the evil inclinations, and ſinful frailties to which it is incident; and his humane nature was aſſiſted in an extraordinary manner by the SPIRIT of GOD, which "was not communicated to him by "meaſure," but "he was anointed with that holy "unction above his fellows," above all the ſons of men, above all the prophets and meſſengers of GOD that ever were ſent to mankind; "he had no "ſin, neither was guile found in his mouth." And indeed it was requiſite, that he that "was manifeſted "to take away our ſins," and to make expiation for them, ſhould himſelf be "without ſin," as the apoſtle to the Hebrews reaſons, Heb. vii. 26. "Such "an high-prieſt became us, who was holy, harm-"leſs, undefiled, ſeparate from ſinners:" and had he not been ſo, he could neither have been an example, nor an expiation.

And this is no ſmall advantage to mankind, to have ſo excellent a pattern of the ſame nature with ourſelves to imitate, ſo perfect a copy to write after. For whoever would excel in any kind, muſt (as Quintilian ſays) *optima quæque exempla ad imitandum proponere*, "propoſe to himſelf the higheſt and "moſt perfect examples of that kind for his imitation;" and the example of our bleſſed SAVIOUR is unqueſtionably ſuch a perfect pattern of all goodneſs and virtue, to the perfection whereof though we can never attain, yet it is a great advantage to have it always before us, and in our eye, that we may correct the errors and deformities of our lives, by the unſpotted purity, and perfect innocency of his

his life, and that we may be always aſpiring after farther degrees of goodneſs; for ſurely we can no way better learn how GOD would have men to live in this world, than by ſeeing how GOD himſelf lived, when he was pleaſed to become man, to aſſume our nature, and dwell among us. SERM. CLXXXIX.

II. As the life of our bleſſed SAVIOUR is a moſt perfect, ſo likewiſe it is a familiar and eaſy example. The divine nature is the great pattern of perfection: but that is too remote from us, and above our ſight; "no man hath ſeen GOD at any "time, nor can ſee him;" and though his perfections are repreſented to our minds in ſome degree, yet they are not ſo glorious and dazzling an object, that we cannot bear to behold them with that ſtedfaſtneſs, with which we ought to eye our pattern; and therefore GOD hath been pleaſed to condeſcend ſo far to our weakneſs, as to give us a viſible example of thoſe virtues he requires of us, in "his own "SON, appearing in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh;" and the SON of GOD is an example of equal perfection with GOD himſelf, but much more eaſy and familiar, and level to us, in which we may ſee the ſeveral virtues of a good life practiſed in ſuch inſtances, and upon ſuch occaſions, as do frequently happen in humane life.

Nothing was ever more ſimple and open, more obvious, and eaſy to common imitation, than the life of our bleſſed SAVIOUR, in which there was nothing dark and myſterious, abſtruſe and intricate; it was all perfect innocency and goodneſs, and he carried on one plain, and intelligible, and uniform deſign, which was to do all the good he poſſibly could to all men: this he purſued with all his might,

with

SERM. with the greateſt vigour and induſtry, with an undaunted courage and reſolution, with an unwearied diligence, with a conſtant chearfulneſs and ſerenity of mind; this was "his meat and drink," his great buſineſs and delight, his life and his happineſs; he was not ſuperciliouſly moroſe, had no affected ſingularities, no peculiar auſterities in habit or diet, different from the common uſage of men: his converſation was kind and innocent, free and familiar, open and indifferent to all ſorts of perſons; for he was a phyſician, and every body had need of him, all mankind were his patients. He did not place religion (as ſome have done ſince) in retirement from the world, and ſhunning the converſation of men, and taking great care to do no body good: not in profound myſteries and fine ſpeculations, but in the plain and honeſt practice of the ſolid and ſubſtantial virtues of a good life; in meekneſs and humility, in kindneſs and charity, in contentedneſs in a low and mean condition, and a calm compoſure of mind under all accidents and events, in patience under the greateſt reproaches and ſufferings, and a perfect ſubmiſſion to the will of GOD in all his diſpenſations, how harſh and unpleaſant ſoever.

Now there is nothing in all this, but what lies open to every man's underſtanding, and is eaſy to our practice and imitation, requiring nothing but an honeſt mind, and due care and diligence to do what we may eaſily know, to follow our guide in a plain way, and in all the actions of our lives, to tread in thoſe ſteps in which the SON of GOD, and the beſt man that ever was, hath gone before us.

III. The life of our bleſſed SAVIOUR is likewiſe an encouraging example. It cannot but give great

great life to all good reſolutions and endeavours, to ſee all that which GOD requires of us performed by one in our nature, by a man like ourſelves. Our SAVIOUR indeed had many advantages above us, being GOD as well as man, and his humanity being ſupported by the divine nature to which it was united, being clear from all the ill effects of original ſin, and from all kind of vicious and inordinate inclination: but then it is a great encouragement to us, to conſider that GOD doth not require at our hands a perfect and unſinning obedience, as the condition of our ſalvation and happineſs; but only ſuch an obedience to his laws, as is ſincere, and continually aſpiring after greater perfection, which is very poſſible to us by the grace of CHRIST, even in this imperfect ſtate; that GOD conſiders our weakneſs, and how much we ſtand in need of his grace and aſſiſtance, and hath aſſured us that it ſhall not be wanting to us, if we heartily and earneſtly beg it of him; and that ſtrength which we may have for aſking, is as good as if it were our own. If CHRIST were the SON of GOD; ſo are we in a lower degree, by grace and adoption; and "if we be the ſons of GOD, the SPIRIT of "GOD dwells in us," to quicken and raiſe us to newneſs of life. And he that hath left us ſuch an example, on purpoſe that we might follow it, will not ſurely leave us deſtitute of power to enable us to do ſo. It is a good argument to us, that he will enable us to do that in ſome degree in our own perſons, which he himſelf did for our example in our nature.

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An example more ſuitable to our weakneſs might ſeem to have had more encouragement in it: but we are to conſider that the SON of GOD aſſumed our

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our nature, as compaſſed with infirmities, and liable "to be tempted in all things as we are, only with-"out ſin;" ſo that his example could not poſſibly have come nearer to us than it does, without great diſadvantage to us, without wanting that perfection which is neceſſary to a complete and abſolute pattern. In ſhort, the SPIRIT of CHRIST dwells in us, and the ſame SPIRIT which kept and preſerved him from all ſin, is equally able to mortify ſin in us, and to enable us to do the will of GOD in ſuch manner as he will accept our juſtification.

IV. It is an univerſal pattern. As the doctrine of our SAVIOUR, ſo his example was of an univerſal nature and deſign, calculated for all times and places, and as much as was poſſible, abſtracted from the circumſtances of a particular condition, that it might be the more equally ſuited to all callings and conditions, and capacities of men, and fitted for general direction and imitation in all ſorts of goodneſs and virtue, either in the general principle, or in the particular inſtances of them. And for this reaſon he would not engage himſelf in any particular calling, or way of life, that his pattern might more equally and indifferently regard all mankind.

He was really a great perſon, the greateſt that ever was in birth and dignity, being the only SON of GOD, the maker and heir of all things: and yet he ſubmitted to the loweſt condition, to all the degrees of poverty and meanneſs, of contempt and ſufferings, to teach men of high degree to be humble and ſerviceable to the good of others; and men of low degree to be contented and chearful in the meaneſt condition, and the hardeſt circumſtances that the

the providence of GOD ſhall ſee good to place them in. SERM. CLXXXIX.

He had the deepeſt and moſt comprehenſive knowledge; "in him," as the apoſtle expreſſeth it, "were "hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge:" and yet he made no vain ſhow and oſtentation of it, he did not puzzle his hearers with abſtruſe ſpeculations and ſublime myſteries, but in a way of plain and familiar inſtruction declared to his hearers thoſe things which were moſt uſeful and neceſſary for them to know. He confuted the doctors, and confounded the wiſdom of the wiſe, thoſe who were conceited of their own knowledge and ſkill in divine things; but was always ready to condeſcend to the weakneſs and ignorance of the meaneſt capacity: giving herein an example to the wiſe and learned, not to make a ſhow of their knowledge, but to make the beſt uſe of it; not to lift up themſelves above others, but to condeſcend and ſtoop to them for good.

He ſometimes retired from converſation and company, that he might be alone, and at leiſure to attend upon GOD, and meditate on divine and heavenly things, without interruption and diſtraction; but moſt frequently be converſed with others, and mingled himſelf with all ſorts of perſons, that he might give all the advantage, and do all the good he could to all men. Nay, he did not decline the converſation of the worſt of men, and it was really true which was objected to him, that "he was a friend "of publicans and ſinners," being ſincerely deſirous to do them the greateſt kindneſs in the world, to reform their manners, and reclaim them to a better courſe; ſo that he was a pattern both of the contemplative and active life, and ſhews us how to mix

SERM. CLXXXIX. theſe to the greateſt advantage; and by his own example teacheth us that we cannot ſerve GOD better than by doing good to men; and that he is as well pleaſed, when we lay out ourſelves for the benefit of others ſpiritual and temporal, as if we employed all our thoughts and meditations wholly upon himſelf and divine things; that a perpetual retirement from the world, and ſhunning the converſation of men, is not the moſt religious life, but living among men and doing good to them.

More particularly, the life of our bleſſed SAVIOUR is a pattern to us,

1. Of the greateſt and moſt ſubſtantial virtues.
2. Of the moſt rare and unuſual.
3. Of the moſt uſeful and beneficial.
4. Of the moſt hard and difficult: and,
5. Of ſuch virtues as are moſt needful; and for the practice of which, there is the greateſt and moſt frequent occaſion in humane life.

1. It is a pattern of the greateſt and moſt ſubſtantial virtues.

Of a fervent piety and devotion toward GOD. We read, that he often retired to pray, and ſometimes ſpent whole nights in it: his mind was continually upon GOD, as appears by his frequent ejaculations upon all occaſions, by his communication and diſcourſe, which was always either inſtructive of men in divine truths, or perſuaſive to a holy practice; from worldly objects and occurrences, he would take occaſion to raiſe ſome ſpiritual meditation, and to ſpeak of heavenly things.

And then his ready and chearful obedience to the will of GOD in all things: "in the volume of the "book it is written of me, I come to do thy will,

" O my GOD." He ſpeaks of it with pleaſure; and SERM.
" he delighted to do it," he declined the will of CLXXXIX.
GOD in no inſtance, how difficult and diſpleaſing ſoever to fleſh and blood.

The perfect purity and innocency of his life: he " was a lamb without ſpot or blemiſh," 1 Pet. i. 19. " He did no ſin." Chap. ii. 21. " Leaving us herein " an example," that though we cannot keep equal pace with him, yet " we ſhould follow his ſteps." " He was holy, harmleſs, undefiled, ſeparate from " ſinners," Heb. vii. 27.

And then his univerſal charity, taking all opportunities to do all the good, temporal and ſpiritual, that he could to all men, of which his whole life is one great and continued inſtance: theſe are all great and ſubſtantial virtues.

I have indeed ſaid nothing of juſtice, both becauſe there was little occaſion for it, he having nothing to do in thoſe matters wherein juſtice is concerned. He had no eſtate of his own, and he meddled not with thoſe of other mens: and likewiſe becauſe his life was all goodneſs, which is a virtue of a higher pitch than juſtice: he that was ſo good to all, we need not doubt of his juſtice, if there had been occaſion for it.

2. He was a pattern of the moſt rare and unuſual virtues.

Such was his ſincerity; " guile was not found in " his mouth," 1 Pet. ii. 22. His converſation was free and open, without diſguiſe and concealment; and therefore when the high-prieſt aſked him of his diſciples, and of his doctrine, John xviii. 19. he wonder'd at the queſtion: " why aſkeſt thou me? " aſk them that heard me. I ſpake openly to the

SERM. CLXXXIX. "world, I ever taught in the ſynagogue, and in the "temple, whither the Jews always reſort, and in ſe- "cret have I ſaid nothing." And this is no common virtue, and therefore our SAVIOUR gave it as a ſingular commendation to Nathanael, John i. 47. "Behold an Iſraelite indeed, in whom there is no "guile." Perfect ſincerity is a great foundation of goodneſs; it is ſoundneſs at the heart, and, like perfect health, ſeldom to be ſeen; there is hardly any thing wherein men, otherwiſe good and virtuous, do oftner trip and falter.

Another virtue, which is not very uſual, was eminent in our SAVIOUR, I mean true humility, without affectation and ſecret pride lurking under it. This appeared very remarkable, and very natural in his whole life, which was all of it the greateſt inſtance of humility that ever was, and therefore with great aſſurance he propounds himſelf to our imitation in this, Matth. xi. 29. "Take my yoke upon you, and learn "of me: for I am meek and lowly in ſpirit." And St. Paul ſets this virtue before us, as being the conſtant temper of our LORD, and viſible in his whole undertaking, and in every part of it from firſt to laſt, from his coming into the world to his going out of it, Phil. ii. 5, 6, 7, 8. "Let this mind be in you "which was alſo in CHRIST JESUS, who being "in the form of GOD, thought it no robbery to be "equal with GOD, but made himſelf of no reputa- "tion (he emptied himſelf of all his majeſty and "glory) and took upon him the form of a ſervant, "and was made in the likeneſs of men; and being "found in faſhion as a man, he humbled himſelf, "and became obedient unto death, even the death "of the croſs." Here was humility indeed, from ſo

great a height to ſtoop ſo low, from the top of glory and majeſty, to the loweſt pitch of meanneſs and miſery. Here's a patter for us; and how ſhould it ſhame and confound the pride of the ſons of men, to ſee the SON of GOD ſo humble? There is no virtue I am ſure which we have ſo much reaſon, and yet none which we have ſo little inclination, to imitate. "Pride "was not made for men," ſays the ſon of Syrach; it does not become us, and yet it is the faſhion; we know that we have no cauſe to be proud, and yet we know not how to be humble. Let the example of our LORD's humility bring down the haughtineſs of men, and when we conſider how he abaſed himſelf, let us "be vile in our own eyes, and abhor ourſelves "in duſt and aſhes."

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And then his contempt of the world, and the enjoyments and pleaſures of it to that degree, that he would have no part and ſhare in the poſſeſſions of it, not ſo much as one of the firſt and almoſt loweſt conveniencies of life, a ſettled abode and habitation; ſo that, as he himſelf tells us, he was in a more deſtitute condition than the brute creatures. "The foxes have "holes, and the birds of the air have neſts; but the "SON of man hath not where to lay his head." Not that he deſigned to oblige us to a ſtrict imitation of him in this particular; for he might, and we may lawfully poſſeſs and enjoy theſe things: but to teach us not to over-prize them, not to ſeek them too earneſtly, nor love them inordinately. That he deſpiſed them, ſhould keep us from admiring them, and doting upon them; that he would not have them in his poſſeſſion, ſhould keep them out of our hearts, and make us very looſe and indifferent in our affections to them; that he valued doing good above all the en-

SERM. CLXXXIX. joyments of this world, ſhould make us value them only in order to that end.

And then his exceſſive kindneſs and benignity to us, ſuch as men very rarely ſhew to their beſt friends, and the beſt men; but ſuch as no man ever ſhewed to his enemies: "peradventure for a good man one "would even dare to die," ſays St. Paul, Rom. v. 7. "but herein GOD commended his love to us, in that "whilſt we were ſinners, CHRIST died for us." And this pattern of love our SAVIOUR propounds to our imitation, John xv. 12, 13. "This is my "commandment, that ye love one another, as I have "loved you. Greater love than this hath no man, "that a man lay down his life for his friend." The higheſt pitch of humane friendſhip that ever was, was "to die for a friend:" but our LORD died not for his friends, but for his enemies, that he might make them his friends, by gaining them to the obedience of his laws: "ye are my friends, if you do whatſo-"ever I command you." The ſame pattern the apoſtles of our LORD propound to us, Eph. v. 2. "Walk in love, as CHRIST alſo hath loved us, "and given himſelf for us." 1 John iii. 16. "Here-"by perceive we the love of GOD, becauſe he laid "down his life for us; and we alſo ought to lay "down our lives for the brethren." Here is a pattern of the higheſt and moſt unuſual kind of love propoſed to our imitation; not that every man, by virtue of this example, is to lay down his life for another, becauſe that is not practicable; for then by the ſame reaſon that I am obliged to lay down my life for another, he would be as much obliged to lay down his life for me; and ſo by my dying for him, I ſhould hinder him of doing a duty to which he was equally obliged,

obliged, and take it out of his hands: but the meaning of this precept is, that as CHRIST died for a common good, ſo we ought to bear that common affection to mankind, and eſpecially to our brethren, who are endeared to us by a nearer relation, as in imitation of the example he hath given us, to be ready by our ſingle life, if there be occaſion, to redeem the lives of many of our brethren, and to expoſe ourſelves to ſave them. This I conceive is all that can reaſonably be collected from our obligation to imitate our LORD's example. SERM. CLXXXIX.

3. The life of our bleſſed SAVIOUR is likewiſe a pattern of ſuch virtues, as are moſt uſeful and beneficial to others.

In his readineſs to do good to all perſons in all kinds; by inſtructing their ignorance, and ſupplying their wants, ſpiritual and temporal; by reſolving their doubts, and comforting them in their ſorrows; by healing their diſeaſes and infirmities, which he indeed did in extraordinary and miraculous ways, becauſe he was deſtitute of ordinary means; and we are to do it by ordinary means, and ſuch as are in our power, which when they are, there is no need of miracles. And then in his ſeeking occaſions and opportunities for it, not content with thoſe that offer'd themſelves, but enquiring after them; and in his unwearied diligence in this work; for "he went about doing "good," ſpent whole days from morning to night, for the ſervice and benefit of others; neglected himſelf, and the ordinary refreſhments of nature, out of his great zeal "to work the work of him that ſent "him," to bring glory to GOD, and good to men.

And in the delight he took in this employment, it was "his meat and drink" to be doing of it; he

SERM. CLXXXIX. eſteemed it his happineſs, yea, a greater felicity to confer benefits upon others, than any man finds in receiving the greateſt benefit from others: for that it ſeems was a noted ſaying of his, a kind of motto with him, as St. Paul teſtifies, Acts xx. 35. "It is "more bleſſed to give than to receive." And in all this, he perſiſted in deſpite of the greateſt diſcouragements from the ingratitude and malice of men, who maligned him for his kindneſs, and put an ill conſtruction upon his moſt charitable actions, and were ready "to ſtone him for his good works:" but this did not diſcourage him, and take him off; ſo he might do good, he was contented to hear and ſuffer ill.

And then in his condeſcenſion to others, and conſideration of their weakneſs, and complying with them in lawful and indifferent things, for their edification, and to gain them in greater matters; this St. Paul tells us, was our LORD's temper, and he urgeth chriſtians with the example of it, Rom. xv. 1, 2, 3. "We then that are ſtrong, ought to bear "the infirmities of the weak, and not to pleaſe our "ſelves. Let every one of us pleaſe his neighbour "for his good to edification: for even CHRIST "pleaſed not himſelf." Where we have liberty and can yield, we ought to abate of our own humour, for the good and edification of others; and not peeviſhly and ſtifly to inſiſt upon leſſer things, to the hindrance of a greater good; "for even CHRIST "pleaſed not himſelf." He who had all authority to command, and right to be obeyed, and who could not err in any thing; yet he condeſcended to the weakneſs and infirmities of others, and in all indifferent things did not conſult his own inclination, but their intereſt and edification.

And

And which greatly conduceth to the comfort and benefit of all ſocieties, both civil and eccleſiaſtical, he gave us the example of an obedient and peaceable temper, conforming himſelf and his actions not only to divine, but humane laws, "giving to Cæſar the "things which are Cæſar's, and to GOD the things "which are GOD's;" inſomuch, that when tribute was demanded of him, though he was really free from any ſuch obligation, and ſo poor, that he was not able to pay it, in which caſe even Cæſar muſt loſe his right; nevertheleſs, to avoid offence, he ſubmitted to it, and choſe rather to work a miracle, than to appear refractory and diſobedient.

And in religious rites and ceremonies, and the obſervance of days and times, he did not only conform to all divine inſtitutions, but to humane appointment and uſage in all things that were of an innocent and indifferent nature; and this without any anxious ſcrupuloſity, and perverſe diſputing every inch of his liberty; with great peaceableneſs obſerving thoſe religious feſtivals, which had no other appointment but of the civil authority, and were of mere humane inſtitution; and with great prudence ſteering a middle courſe between endleſs ſuperſtition, and ſcrupulous and petulant faction; giving all chriſtians herein a pattern, how to demean themſelves in like caſes with great peaceableneſs and obedience, and not to do or avoid the doing of any thing, out of peeviſhneſs and ſingularity of humour, and a ſpirit of contradiction, and not to indulge needleſs and endleſs ſcruples, eſpecially on the wrong ſide, as it is too viſible many mens ſcruples lie almoſt wholly about obedience to authority, and compliance with indifferent cuſtoms, but very ſeldom about the danger of diſobedience

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bedience and unpeaceableneſs, and rending in pieces the church of CHRIST by needleſs ſeparations, and endleſs diviſions.

And our LORD did not only give us the example of a peaceable and uniting ſpirit, but a little before his departure out of the world, he bequeaths it to his diſciples, as his laſt legacy. John xiv. 27. "Peace I "leave with you, my peace I give unto you." And to confirm it to them, he makes it his moſt earneſt and particular prayer to GOD for them, that GOD would preſerve this ſpirit of peace and unity among chriſtians to the end of the world, foreſeeing in his infinite wiſdom, what miſchiefs and diſhonour the contrary temper would bring to his holy religion, John xvii. 20, 21, 22, 23. "Neither pray I for theſe "alone," meaning his diſciples, "but for them alſo "which ſhall believe on me through their word," that is, for all chriſtians to the end of the world;" "that they all may be one, as thou FATHER "art in me, and I in thee, that they alſo may be "one in us; that the world may believe that thou "haſt ſent me. And the glory which thou gaveſt "me, I have given them; that they may be one, "even as we are one. I in them, and thou in me, "that they may be made perfect in one, and that the "world may know that thou haſt ſent me." Intimating, that nothing is more apt to bring in queſtion the divinity of the chriſtian doctrine, than contentions and diviſions among chriſtians, "that the "world may know that thou haſt ſent me."

Let us often think of this pattern, and this prayer of our SAVIOUR, and let the conſideration of it quell thoſe unchriſtian heats which are among us, leſt by our animoſities and diviſions about leſſer things, which,

which, whatever opinion men may have of them, do no ways touch upon the life and eſſence of religion, we firſt diſhonour, and finally deſtroy from among us the beſt religion in the world. "And GOD "grant that we may all know and do in this our "day, the things which belong to our peace, before "they be hid from our eyes, for his mercy's ſake in "JESUS CHRIST; to whom with the FATHER, "and the HOLY GHOST, be all power and glory "now and ever."

# SERMON CXC.

## The life of JESUS CHRIST conſidered, as our example.

1 PET. ii. 21.

*—Leaving us an example, that ye ſhould follow his ſteps.*

I Have conſidered our SAVIOUR's example, as an univerſal pattern, calculated for all perſons, times and places; and this I illuſtrated in theſe particulars: SERM. CXC. The ſecond ſermon on this text.

1. That it was a pattern to us of the greateſt and moſt ſubſtantial virtues.

2. Of ſuch as are moſt rare and unuſual.

3. Of ſuch as are moſt uſeful and beneficial to others: I proceed to the particulars which remain to be ſpoken to.

4. Our SAVIOUR is likewiſe a pattern to us of ſuch virtues as are moſt hard and difficult to be practiſed,

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practiſed, ſuch as are moſt againſt the grain of our corrupt nature, and moſt contrary to fleſh and blood.

Every virtue is then hard and difficult, when it either contradicts the ſtrong inclinations of nature, or meets with powerful temptations to the contrary.

The virtues which thwart the inclinations of humane nature, are comprehended under the general name of ſelf-denial, the denial of ourſelves in thoſe things which are commonly deareſt to men; ſuch are our own life, our pleaſure, our eaſe, our reputation; in all theſe, our bleſſed LORD hath given us the greateſt example of ſelf-denial that ever was; he denied his own life, and gave up himſelf wholly to the will of GOD, to do and ſuffer whatever he thought fit to impoſe upon him. So he himſelf tells us, John v. 30. "I ſeek not mine own will, but "the will of the FATHER which ſent me:" and John vi. 30. "I came down from heaven not to do "mine own will, but the will of him that ſent me." And when he was in that great agony, upon the apprehenſion of his approaching ſufferings, at which nature did ſtart, and when that "bitter cup, that "cup of aſtoniſhment," was put into his hand, tho' he would have been glad to have declin'd it, if GOD had thought fit; yet upon the whole matter he ſubmitted to it, and renounced his own will, the ſtrongeſt inclination of nature that could be, in obedience to the will of GOD, Mat. xxvi. 39. "He "fell on his face and prayed, ſaying, O my FA-"THER, if it be poſſible, let this cup paſs from "me; nevertheleſs not as I will, but as thou wilt:" and ver. 42. "He went away again the ſecond time, "and pray'd, ſaying, O my FATHER, if this cup "may

" may not paſs from me, except I drink it, thy " will be done." Here was a great conflict; nature declined thoſe dreadful ſufferings, which were coming upon him, and would have ſhrunk back: but he conſider'd his duty, and made his inclination to yield to it. SERM. CXC.

And he did not only deny his own will in obedience to the will of GOD, for which there is ſo great and invincible reaſon; but he denied it likewiſe in compliance and condeſcenſion to the prejudices, and humours and infirmities of men, for their " edification and good." So St. Paul tells us, and propounds our LORD herein to us for a pattern. Rom. xv. 2, 3.

He denied himſelf in the lawful pleaſures and ſatisfactions, in the eaſe and accommodations of life, he lived meanly, and fared hardly; he poſſeſs'd and enjoyed none of the good things of this world, and endured all the evils of it; he deſpiſed riches, and the pomp and pride of life, and contented himſelf with a poor and deſtitute condition, " having not " where to lay his head," nor wherewithal to ſupport nature, and to defray the common tribute, without a miracle And he did not ſubmit to this poor and mean condition upon neceſſity, for " he " was LORD of all;" he made the world, and it was all his own upon the higheſt right and title: but he voluntarily embraced it, " being rich, for our " ſake he became poor," that he might wean us from the love of theſe things, and be an effectual example to us of the contempt of worldly wealth and greatneſs.

And he denied himſelf likewiſe in one of the deareſt and tendereſt things in the world, to the wiſeſt

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wiſeſt and greateſt minds, I mean in point of reputation: "he made himſelf of no reputation," ſays "St. Paul, Phil. ii. 7. ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσε, "he emptied "himſelf." To ſubmit to contempt, is to empty one's ſelf indeed: reputation being one of the laſt things a generous mind will be content to forego, and that which ſome have held in equal dearneſs and eſteem with life itſelf; yet in this our LORD denied himſelf, and that he might do good to mankind, was contented to be eſteemed one of the worſt of men; and without any kind of cauſe and deſert to undergo all manner of obloquy and reproach, to be accounted a magician and impoſtor, "a friend and "companion of publicans and ſinners," a ſeducer of people, a ſeditious perſon, and more worthy of the moſt cruel and ſhameful death than the greateſt malefactor. Thus was the SON of GOD contented to be ſet below the worſt of men, to be abaſed and vilified, that he might be a perfect pattern to us of this difficult virtue of ſelf-denial, even in thoſe things which are held in the greateſt eſteem among the beſt of men.

And ſurely in no caſe is example more neceſſary than in this, to animate and encourage us in the diſcharge of ſo difficult a duty, ſo contrary to the bent and inclination of our nature. A bare precept of ſelf-denial in theſe things, and a peremptory command to ſacrifice our own wills, our eaſe, our pleaſure and reputation, yea and life itſelf to the glory of GOD, and the good of men, would have ſounded very harſh and ſevere, had not the practice of all this been exemplified in a pattern of ſo much advantage: one who in all theſe reſpects denied himſelf much more than is poſſible for us to do, who might have inſiſted

inſiſted upon a greater right, who abaſed himſelf, SERM. and ſtoop'd from a greater height and dignity, who CXC. did not ſubmit to a condition of poverty and meanneſs when it was unavoidable, but choſe it; who ſubmitted to ſuffering, though he never deſerved it, and who met with all the contempt and reproach imaginable, whilſt he truly deſerved the greateſt eſteem and reputation. Here is an example that hath all the argument, and all the encouragement that can be to the imitation of it. Was he, who had ſo regular a will and inclination, contented to have it crucified and thwarted? did he, who had an unqueſtionable right to all the riches and enjoyments of the world, renounce them all, and embrace poverty? did he, to whoſe deep wiſdom and judgment all mankind ought to ſubmit, condeſcend to the weakneſs of others, and "not pleaſe himſelf?" did he, who never did the leaſt thing in his whole life that might juſtly ſtain or blemiſh his reputation, patiently bear all ſorts of contumely and reproach? and ſhall we think much to deny ourſelves in any of theſe? ſuch an example is of greater force and authority than any precept or law. Well might our LORD, thus going before us, command us to follow him, ſaying, "if "any man will be my diſciple, let him deny him-"ſelf, and take up his croſs and follow me." If he thus denied himſelf, well may we, who have much leſs to deny, and much more reaſon and cauſe to do it; for, as he argues, "the diſciple is not greater than "his maſter, nor the ſervant than his lord." He did it voluntarily and of choice; it is our duty: he did it for our ſakes; we do it for our own: we did not deſerve it of him; but he hath merited it of us.

Our

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Our LORD did not, like the phariſees, give ſtrict precepts to others, which they themſelves did not follow. "They ſaid, and did not, laid heavy burdens "upon others, and grievous to be born, when they "themſelves would not touch them with one of their "fingers:" nor like the philoſophers, who ſpake fine and glorious things of goodneſs and virtue, but did much like other men; gave ſtrict rules to others, but lived looſely themſelves; and therefore it is no wonder that their diſcourſes had ſo little effect upon the lives and manners of men, and were ſo unavailable to the reformation of the world. Precepts of great ſtrictneſs and ſeverity, are like to be obeyed very ſlowly and faintly, unleſs they be ſweetned and made eaſy by the familiar practice of thoſe that give them. In a way that is rugged and difficult, full of trouble and danger, it is not enough to bid men go on; but he that bids them, muſt go before them, and take them by the hand, and give them an example to follow his ſteps; without this, rules and precepts are very dry things, and give but faint and cold encouragement. Cæſar's example prevailed much more upon his ſoldiers, than his word of command. No man ever diſcours'd better of magnanimity and greatneſs of mind, in great dangers and calamities, than Tully does; and yet when it came to the trial, no man ever behaved himſelf more faintly, and ſhewed greater dejection of mind than he did; ſo that it is hard to ſay, whether his diſcourſes are more apt to raiſe, or his example to damp a man's ſpirit. Seneca writes with wonderful wit and ſmartneſs, with great fineneſs and force of argument, about the contempt of the world and wealth; but then to conſider how he flowed in wealth himſelf, and how intent he was

to

to heap up riches beyond meaſure, would make a man more apt to deſpiſe him, than the world. So neceſſary is it that precepts, eſpecially of great difficulty, ſhould be back'd and enforc'd by example, and that ſevere rules ſhould be mollified, and made eaſy by the practice of thoſe who preſcribe them. And this our LORD took particular care to do in thoſe precepts of his, which ſeem to offer the greateſt violence to the common bent and inclination of humane nature. SERM. CXC.

And ſo he did likewiſe in thoſe virtues which are ſo difficult upon the account of temptation from without, as well as of inclination from within. Not to inſiſt upon his firm reſiſtance of all the temptations to ambition, which made not the leaſt impreſſion upon him; the offer of "the kingdoms of the "world, and the glory of them," had no influence upon him. He was ſometimes in great favour with the people, and mightily applauded by them, for "ſpeak-"ing as never man ſpake," and doing ſuch things, as no man ever did: but he was as little moved by their applauſe, as he was dejected by their reproaches. When the people would have made him king, to qualify him the better, as they thought, to be the MESSIAS, he would not take ſo much notice of the offer, as to refuſe it, but ſilently withdrew himſelf, that they knew not where to find him.

But that which I ſhall particularly take notice of under this head, is his great meekneſs, which is a very difficult virtue; if we conſider the peeviſhneſs and infirmity of humane nature, and the frequent temptations to paſſion and anger, which occur in humane life, and theſe very ſudden and ſurpriſing; ſo that there is nothing wherein wiſe men do oftner

SERM. CXC. betray their own weakneſs, than in the matter o ſudden anger. Moſes, the greateſt of all the pro phets that had been, and who it ſeems was naturall of a meek temper, having this teſtimony given him b the SPIRIT of GOD, that "he was the meekeſt "man upon earth;" yet he miſcarried in this mat ter, and not being able to bear the continual perverſe neſs of that people, loſt his temper, and fell into a irregular paſſion. But our bleſſed LORD, whoſe temper was perpetually aſſaulted with the higheſt provocations in all kinds, ſtill maintained the even neſs and meekneſs of his ſpirit.

The dulneſs and flowneſs of his diſciples, to un derſtand and believe what he had ſo plainly taught, and ſo often inculcated upon them, was a great trial of patience; which yet provoked him no farther, than to a juſt rebuke of their fault. The hardeſt words he ever gave them, were, "O unwiſe and "ſlow of heart to believe! how long ſhall I ſuffer "you?" and when he was in the height of his ſorrow and trouble, and his diſciples were ſo un concerned for him, as to fall aſleep, in the ſame breath that the reproves their drowſineſs, he makes an excuſe for it: "can ye not watch with me one "hour? the ſpirit indeed is willing: but the fleſh "is weak." This carriage from his friends and fol lowers, when he ſtood in moſt need of their comfort and aſſiſtance, and "his ſoul was exceeding ſorrow "ful, even to the death," was a great temptation to anger, eſpecially falling upon a ſore and afflicted mind; and yet it was ſo far from provoking his an ger, that it rather moved his pity toward them.

His ſharp reproofs of the Scribes and Phariſees, were but a neceſſary ſeverity, and a juſt expreſſion

of his indignation at the fulſom hypocriſy of ſuch great pretenders to piety and devotion; for "he "knew their hearts." His whipping of the buyers and ſellers out of the temple, the only action of his life in which there appears any tranſport of anger, was no other but a becoming zeal for the honour of GOD's houſe, which he ſaw ſo notoriouſly profaned; which zeal was warranted, after the example of Phineas, by the extraordinary occaſion of it. In all his other actions, he was perfectly meek and lowly in ſpirit, void of pride, one of the chief cauſes of inordinate anger. We cannot ſay he was never angry; but whenever he was ſo, which was very ſeldom, "he ſinned not;" it was upon great and juſt occaſion, and never to any undue degree. SERM. CXC.

And this is the more remarkable, becauſe he was very apt to receive the impreſſions of other paſſions; love and pity, which eaſily moved him to kindneſs and compaſſion. He could not forbear to weep, when he ſaw Lazarus his friends lamenting over his grave, though he knew the cauſe of their ſorrow would ſoon be removed and turned into joy, by his reſurrection to life. Nay, he had not only this tenderneſs towards his friends, but even to his greateſt enemies. When he looked upon Jeruſalem, and foreſaw the terrible revenge that GOD would take upon his enemies and murderers, and beheld at a great diſtance the dreadful calamities that were coming upon them, he could not refrain from tears. He allowed himſelf in theſe innocent and humane paſſions; but where there was danger of tranſgreſſing, as there is in no paſſion more than that of anger, he was continually upon his guard, and govern'd

SERM. CXC.

sonably? And when, in the extremity of his sufferings, the high-priests, and the soldiers, and the people, all joined together to revile him, and insult over his misery, in the most barbarous and cruel manner; instead of breaking out into passion in this anguish of his soul, he pours out his prayers to GOD on their behalf, and makes the most charitable excuse and apology for them, that their crime was possibly capable of: "FATHER, forgive them; for they "know not what they do." While he felt the bitter effects of their malice, he imputes it to their ignorance. Here is an example of meekness fit for the SON of GOD to give, and much more fit for the sons of men to follow; for as the wise son of Syrach says excellently, "pride was not made for "men, nor furious anger for him that was born of "a woman."

And having such an example left us of this great virtue, let us do likewise, since as St. Peter tells us, he suffered with all this meekness and patience, "to "leave us an example, that ye might follow his "steps; who when he was reviled, reviled not again; "when he suffered, he threatned not; but commit-"ted himself to him that judgeth righteously." When we consider this example, can we resent so highly every petty injury and provocation; and upon every slighting word proceed to a challenge and a quarrel, and entertain fierce and implacable thoughts of revenge? When the SON of GOD with so much meekness "endured the continual contradictions of "sinners," and put up such outrageous affronts and indignities from his creatures, those ungrateful wretches whom he had made, and whom he came to save, and for whom he offered to give that very blood,

which

which they ſo cruelly and maliciouſly ſhed, for the ex- SERM. CXC.
piation of their guilt.

To all which I ſhall add, his readineſs to forgive injuries, conſidering the temptations he had to wrath and revenge, from the ſpiteful reproaches and injurious calumnies, and continual perſecution of his bitter and implacable enemies without a cauſe; who purſued him with inceſſant rage and malice, and never gave over till they had wrought his ruin, and by falſe accuſations, and a moſt violent perſecution, and ſeditious tumults and clamours, they had forc'd the Roman governor, contrary to his inclination, and the convictions of his own mind and conſcience, and againſt all reaſon and juſtice, to paſs ſentence upon him, when he declared "he ſaw nothing in him "worthy of death," and to condemn him to a moſt painful and ignominious death. Nor did their malice end here; but they aggravated his ſufferings with ſcurrilous taunts and reproaches, and all the rudeneſs and indignities imaginable: and yet all this injurious and cruel uſage, did not provoke him to one revengeful thought; could not extort from him ſo much as one peeviſh, or miſbecoming, or threatning word. "When he was reviled, he reviled not again; "when he ſuffer'd, he threatned not." But notwithſtanding all this provocation, he was more ready to forgive the injuries and indignities they put upon him, than they could be to offer them, and implored the mercy and forgiveneſs of GOD for them, as heartily and earneſtly as they had ſolicited his death and deſtruction.

It is eaſy to give precepts of forgiveneſs, to bid men "love their enemies, bleſs them that curſe "them, do good to them that hate them, and pray

SERM. CXC. "for them that deſpitefully uſe them and perſecute "them, and to forgive our brother that offends us, "not only to ſeven times but to ſeventy times ſeven," without ſtint and limit: but the practice of this is exceeding difficult; for how hard do we find it to paſs by a little provocation, and upon a very ſmall affront and indignity offer'd to us, to ſuppreſs the thought and deſire of revenge, and to command our paſſion from breaking out in word or deed? but much more difficult is it perfectly to forgive, to love our enemies, to pray for them, and to be ready to do them good. Such a difficult virtue as this had need of all ſorts of inducements to engage us to the practice of it. And therefore our bleſſed LORD did not think it enough ſtrictly to enjoin it, and to enforce it upon us by the moſt powerful conſiderations, teaching us in our daily prayers, to beg mercy and forgiveneſs of GOD upon this condition, "that we forgive others," and not to hope for it upon other terms; telling us, that as we demean ourſelves toward one another in this caſe of injuries and provocations, ſo GOD will deal with us; "if ye forgive men their treſpaſſes, your "heavenly FATHER will alſo forgive you: but if "ye forgive not men their treſpaſſes, neither will your "heavenly FATHER forgive you your treſpaſſes." Nothing can be urged upon us with greater force than this duty is, becauſe upon our practice and performance of it, all our hopes of mercy and forgiveneſs from GOD are ſuſpended. But yet it is difficult after all this; and therefore to allure us more powerfully to the practice of it, our LORD hath given us the example of it in the whole courſe of his life; in which being continually aſſaulted with injuries and provocations, he had perpetual occaſion for the

the practice of forgiveneſs; and that in greater in- SERM.
ſtances, and upon occaſion of greater injuries, than CXC.
any of us are capable of receiving. He who could never ſtand in need of forgiveneſs from men, who needed none from GOD, who had it always in his power to have revenged with eaſe, and to the utmoſt, all the provocations and affronts that were offered to him; he who had none of thoſe powerful inducements to forgiveneſs which we have, was thus ready to forgive; and did it perpetually, upon the greateſt, upon innumerable occaſions; he forgave his enemies all their ill-will toward him, and all their vile and malicious uſage of him throughout his whole life: but moſt remarkably at his death, when the provocations were greateſt and moſt violent, when they fell thick and in ſtorms upon him, and when they were more grievous and piercing, in the very agony and anguiſh of his ſuffering; in theſe hard and preſſing circumſtances, he was ſo far from breathing out threatening and revenge againſt the authors of his cruel ſufferings, that with his laſt breath he did moſt effectually declare his free forgiveneſs of them, and perfect charity towards them, by his fervent prayer to GOD for them; "FATHER forgive them, for "they know not what they do."

5. And laſtly, our SAVIOUR is likewiſe a pattern to us of the moſt needful virtues, and for the practice whereof there is the greateſt and moſt frequent occaſion in humane life.

Several of theſe I have already mentioned under the former heads; as ſincerity; which hath an univerſal influence upon all our actions, and is a principal ingredient into all the duties and ſervices which we are to perform to GOD and men; humility and meekneſs,

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meekneſs, for the exerciſe whereof there is almoſt continual occaſion in all our converſation with others. Theſe have been ſpoken to, I ſhall therefore inſtance in ſome others, which are likewiſe of great and frequent uſe in humane life.

(1.) The great humanity of his carriage and deportment, of which he gave manifold inſtances, in his free and familiar converſation with all ſorts of people. He did not deſpiſe the meaneſt. How familiarly did he talk with the woman of Samaria? inſomuch that his diſciples were offended at it, and "marvel-"led that he talked with her." He did not decline the converſation of the worſt of men, where he had any hope of making them better by it; and though his "companying with publicans and ſinners" was often objected as matter of ſcandal to him, yet he would not for that reaſon neglect any opportunity of doing good. He was affable to his inferiors, to the meaneſt perſon that had occaſion to ſpeak with him; yea "he rebuked his diſciples, for forbidding the "little children to come to him." They would have kept them from him, becauſe they could not imagine to what purpoſe they ſhould be permitted to come to him: but though they were not capable of his inſtructions, yet they were of his kindneſs and bleſſing. "He took them up in his arms, and laid "his hands upon them, and bleſſed them;" and he propoſed them to his diſciples as emblems of that innocency and ſimplicity, without which no man ſhall enter into the kingdom of GOD.

His humanity likewiſe appeared in the tenderneſs and compaſſion of his nature, towards all that were in want or miſery of any kind. "He healed all man-"ner of ſickneſſes and diſeaſes among the people,

"and

" and went about doing good." And when his followers, by their long attendance upon him in deſert and ſolitary places to hear his doctrine, were pinched with hunger, he could not find in his heart to diſmiſs them without ſome refreſhment: and having no other means, did it by a miracle. He was very apt to ſympathize with the condition of others, " to weep with " them that wept," as he did with the friends of Lazarus over his grave: nay, he had a tenderneſs for his enemies; when he beheld Jeruſalem, and the ſad fate which hung over it for their obſtinate impenitency, he could not refrain from tears at the thoughts of it. SERM. CXC.

Another inſtance of his humanity was his eaſineſs to be intreated, and readineſs to yield to the requeſt of thoſe who deſired his company, or implored his help and aſſiſtance. And as he was moſt ready to do good to all, ſo he did not diſdain to receive kindneſs from any; complying chearfully with the deſires of thoſe who invited him to their houſes, and accepting kindly any well-intended reſpect. How did he reſent the extraordinary kindneſs of the devout woman, who poured the box of rich ointment upon his head? taking care that the memory of it ſhould be tranſmitted to all generations, and proclaimed over the whole world, Matth. xxvi. 13.

(2.) Another very needful virtue, and for which our LORD was very eminent, was his neglect and diſregard of the opinion of men, in compariſon of his duty. As he was not affected, much leſs puffed up with their applauſe, (which is an argument of a vain and light mind) ſo was he as little moved with their cenſures and reproaches, by which he was neither diſordered in his paſſions, nor diſcouraged from well-doing.

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well-doing. He took heed to his duty, and made ſure to do the things which pleaſed GOD, and was not very ſolicitous what men ſaid or thought of him. He obſerved in the Phariſees, how great a temptation and hindrance to the receiving of his doctrine, an undue regard to the praiſe and cenſure of men was: "They loved the praiſe of men more than the "praiſe of GOD," as he tells us, John xii. 43. and chap. v. 44. "How can ye believe, which re- "ceive honour one of another, and ſeek not the ho- "nour which cometh from GOD only?" Not that we are to ſlight and neglect the opinion of others concerning our actions; that is pride and ſelf-conceit; and our LORD himſelf was not ſo regardleſs of his reputation, as not to take great care to give no juſt occaſion of cenſure, no needleſs handle to ſlander and calumny; he vindicated himſelf upon all occaſions, and was ready to give a fair and reaſonable account of his actions, to thoſe who found fault with them, nay, even maliciouſly carped at them; he prudently avoided occaſions of offence, and by wiſe and cautious anſwers, many times avoided the ſnares that were laid to bring him under obloquy and reproach: but in competition with his plain duty, he neither regarded the applauſe nor cenſures of men; he complied with them in nothing that was bad, to gain their good opinion and eſteem; nor was he hindered and diſcouraged from any thing that was good, for fear of being ill ſpoken of, or of having a bad interpretation put upon his good actions.

And this is a virtue very neceſſary to a good man, eſpecially in bad times, and requires a good degree of fortitude and firmneſs of reſolution to make a man maſter of it. And 'tis not more neceſſary than it

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is reaſonable: for it is not in our power whether men ſhall ſpeak well or ill of us; but it is in our power, whether we will do well or ill. It is many times impoſſible to pleaſe men, they are ſo divided in their opinions about good and evil; but we may make ſure to pleaſe GOD, and to gain his praiſe and approbation, "whoſe judgment is always according "to truth." It is a vain and endleſs thing to live up to the humours and opinions of men, which are variable and uncertain; but if we keep ſteady to our duty, we live to the conſciences of men, which firſt or laſt will come to themſelves, and come over to us, and approve of that which is good. This is, as St. Paul ſpeaks, "to commend ourſelves to every man's "conſcience in the ſight of GOD." 

(3.) Another virtue for which there is great occaſion in humane life, and for which our LORD was very remarkable, was his contentedneſs in a mean and poor condition, and ſuch was his condition to the very loweſt degree. He was deſtitute of the ordinary conveniencies and neceſſary ſupports of life; he lived generally upon the kindneſs and charity of others, and when that failed, and he wanted ordinary ſupports, as he often did, he was maintained by miracle: and yet in this mean and neceſſitous condition, he had a conſtant evenneſs and ſerenity of mind; he had no anxious care and ſolicitude upon him, "what he ſhould eat, and what he ſhould "drink, or wherewithal he ſhould be clothed;" he never murmured at the unequal providence of GOD, never uttered one diſcontented, or envious word at the plenty and proſperity of others; he rather pitied the misfortune of rich and great men, who were expoſed to ſo many temptations, that "it was very

"hard

SERM. CXC. "hard for them," in his opinion, "to be ſaved;" but he enjoyed himſelf, and ſerved GOD, and went about doing good, and depended upon the providence of GOD for his daily food; and if at any time that was wanting, he tells his diſciples, that "he had meat "to eat which they knew not of;" for "it was "his meat and drink to do the will of his FA-"THER." By all that appears in the hiſtory of his life, (and we are ſure that it is true) no man was ever poorer, and yet no man ever more contented than he was; which is not only an example of contentendneſs to thoſe, whom the providence of GOD hath placed in the extremity of meanneſs and want, but a much ſtronger and more forcible argument of contentment in every condition. For diſcontent is not only the portion of the poor, but of thoſe who have a competency, becauſe they have not plenty; and many times of thoſe who have plenty and abundance, becauſe they are wanton and fooliſh, and know not what they would have; ſo that our SAVIOUR, by giving an example of contentment to thoſe of the pooreſt and meaneſt condition, hath given it much more to thoſe who are in better circumſtances. A narrow fortune is riches in compariſon of none; a competency is plenty, compared with poverty, and the want of the ordinary accommodations of life. If the SON of GOD ſubmitted to the loweſt and pooreſt condition, and bore it with ſo much evenneſs and tranquillity of mind; well may we, if GOD call us to it. If he that was "heir of "all things," was deſtitute of all things, and well contented to be ſo; ſhall we murmur and repine, if we be in the ſame circumſtances? if this example be of any force, (as it is certainly of the greateſt)

ſhould

ſhould the providence of GOD ſee fit to reduce us to the loweſt condition of want, we have no reaſon for diſcontent; but if he afford us a competency, we have no colour and pretence for it, unleſs we think ourſelves better than the SON of GOD, and can claim a greater right to the poſſeſſions and enjoyments of this world, than he that made it. SERM. CXC.

Before this example, we might have thought that poverty and meanneſs had been a ſign of GOD's hatred and diſpleaſure, or at leaſt an argument of leſs love and regard: but now that we ſee him, whom GOD loved infinitely better than any man in the world, to have been one of the pooreſt men that ever lived; this is a demonſtration, that a man may be entirely beloved of GOD, though he be in the pooreſt and moſt deſtitute condition; for in ſuch a condition he thought fit to place "his beloved SON "in whom he was well pleaſed." And if poverty be conſiſtent with the higheſt degree of GOD's love and favour, we may bear it contentedly; and if there be any reaſon for contentment even in poverty, to be diſcontented in any condition that is above it, is ſhameful and intolerable. Of ſuch force is this example of our LORD, to baniſh diſcontent from any condition we are liable to in this world. The

(4.) And laſt virtue I ſhall inſtance in, and for the exerciſe whereof there is very great and frequent occaſion in humane life, is patience under ſufferings, and ſuch a perfect reſignation of ourſelves to the will of GOD, that whatever pleaſeth him ſhould pleaſe us, how diſtaſteful and grievous ſoever it be. And of this virtue our bleſſed SAVIOUR was the greateſt example that ever was; his whole life, from his birth to his death, was made up of perſecution and patience,

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tience, and was a continual exercise of this virtue. There had been great examples in all ages of the sufferings and patience of good men, which we might propound to ourselves with great advantage; and so St. James exhorts the christians to do, James v. 10. "Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have "spoken in the name of the LORD, for an example "of suffering affliction, and of patience." Job especially was a most eminent example in this kind: "ye have heard, says he, of the patience of Job." And all these examples are of great use, and considerable arguments to this virtue; but the pattern of our LORD's sufferings and patience is a greater example, and a more powerful argument than all these. His sufferings were far greater than any man's ever were; "never was any sorrow like to his sorrow, "wherewith the LORD afflicted him in the day of "his fierce anger;" and his patience was greater than any man's ever was; not only because he suffered more than any one of the sons of men ever did, but because he suffered without cause, being perfectly innocent, and free from the least personal fault and guilt. Well may we "bear the indignation of "the LORD patiently, because we have sinned "against him." Whatever we suffer, our consciences tell us we have deserved it all, and much more from the hand of GOD, and "that our punish-"ment is always less than our iniquities have de-"served." Sin is at the bottom of all our sufferings, and "if we be buffeted for our faults, we ought to "take it patiently." Upon this consideration, St. Peter recommends to us the example of our LORD's sufferings and patience, as a powerful argument to work the same temper and disposition in us, 1 Pet. ii. 20,

20, 21, 22. " For what glory is it, if when ye be SERM.
" buffeted for your faults, ye ſhall take it patiently? CXC.
" but if when ye do well and ſuffer for it, ye take
" it patiently; this is acceptable with GOD. For
" hereunto were ye called: becauſe CHRIST alſo
" ſuffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye
" ſhould follow his ſteps, who did no ſin." Where the apoſtle inſinuates a two fold difference between our LORD's ſuffering for us, and ours. He ſuffered for us: but we upon our own account, and for our own faults. He was perfectly innocent, " he had " no ſin," and yet he ſuffered with ſo much patience; much more ought we: for by how much the more guilt, ſo much the greater reaſon for patience; and the more innocent the perſon is that ſuffers, ſo much the more perfect and commendable is his patience.

So that the greatneſs of our LORD's ſufferings, conſider'd together with his perfect innocency, gives his example a peculiar force and advantage above all other examples whatſoever. And therefore the apoſtle to the Hebrews, after a great number of examples of the perſecution and patience of the ſaints in all ages, not content with theſe, he adds that of our LORD, as the moſt perfect and powerful example of all others, Heb. xii. 1, 2, 3. " Wherefore ſeeing " we alſo are compaſs'd about with ſuch a cloud of " witneſſes, let us run with patience the race that " is ſet before us, looking unto JESUS, the author " and finiſher of our faith, who for the joy that was " ſet before him, endured the croſs, deſpiſing the " ſhame. For conſider him that endured ſuch con- " tradiction of ſinners againſt himſelf, leſt ye be " weary and faint in your minds." Such contradiction of ſinners; ſuch as no man ever en-

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dured; and yet he bore all this, not with a ſtoical and ſtupid inſenſibility, but with a true patience. For no man had greater apprehenſions of ſuffering, and a more quick and tender ſenſe of it, than he had. He had not only the more manly virtues of wiſdom, and reſolution, and conſtancy; but was clothed alſo with the ſofter paſſions of humane nature, meekneſs, and compaſſion, and grief, and a tender ſenſe of pain and ſuffering. "He took our infirmities," ſays the prophet, "and bore our griefs." And this he expreſs'd both in his agony in the garden, and in his behaviour upon the croſs; he did not deſpiſe pain, but dreaded it, and yet ſubmitted to it; he did not outbrave his ſufferings, but bore them decently; he had a humane ſenſe of them, but underwent them with a divine patience, reſigning himſelf abſolutely to the will of GOD, when he ſaw them coming; and when they were upon him, expreſſing a great ſenſe of pain, without the leaſt ſign of impatience. And hereby he was a pattern accommodated to the weakeſt and tendereſt of mankind; he did not give us an extravagant example of bravery, and a ſturdy reſolution; but, which was much fitter for us, of a patient ſubmiſſion to the will of GOD, under a great ſenſe of ſuffering.

Before I come to the fifth and laſt advantage of our LORD'S example, it will be requiſite to clear what hath been ſaid from three or four obvious objections. But this I ſhall reſerve for another diſcourſe.

SER-

# SERMON CXCI.

## The life of JESUS CHRIST conſidered, as our example.

1 PET. ii. 21.

*—Leaving us an example, that ye ſhould follow his ſteps.*

SERM. CXCI. The third ſermon on this text. Preach'd March 25. 1686.

THE example of CHRIST is an argument never unſeaſonable; and though it be ſomewhat foreign to the occaſion of this day, yet it will afford us ſomething not improper to be conſider'd by us, concerning the bleſſed mother of our LORD. I have handled this argument of our LORD's example very largely, and among other things, have ſhewn the manifold advantage of it, in theſe following reſpects:

I. That the example of our LORD is a moſt abſolute and perfect pattern, being the life of GOD, in the nature and likeneſs of man.

II. A moſt familiar and eaſy example, in which we ſee the ſeveral virtues of a good life practiſed in ſuch inſtances, and upon ſuch occaſions, as do frequently happen in humane life.

III. It is an encouraging example; nothing being more apt to give life to good reſolutions and endeavours, than to ſee all that which GOD requires of us, performed by one in our own nature, and a man as like ourſelves, as it is poſſible for a perfect pattern to be.

IV. It is likewiſe an univerſal example, calculated as equally as is poſſible for all conditions and capaci-

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ties of men, and fitted for general direction and imitation of all ſorts of virtue and goodneſs; ſuch virtues as are the greateſt and moſt ſubſtantial, the moſt rare and unuſual, the moſt uſeful and beneficial to others, the moſt hard and difficult to be practiſed, and for the exerciſe whereof, there is the greateſt and moſt frequent occaſion in humane life. There remains now only to be ſpoken to, the

V. And laſt advantage, which I mentioned of our LORD's example, that it is in the nature of it, very powerful to engage and oblige all men to the imitation of it. But before I enter upon this, I propoſed to clear what hath been already ſaid concerning our LORD's example, from three or four obvious objections.

The firſt objection is, that a great part of our SAVIOUR's life conſiſted of miraculous actions, wherein we cannot imitate him.

This is very true; and for that very reaſon, becauſe we cannot imitate him herein, we are not obliged to do it: but we may imitate the compaſſion and charity which he ſhewed in his miracles, by ſuch ways and in ſuch effects, as are within the compaſs of our power. We are not "anointed, as he "was, with the HOLY GHOST, and with power, "to heal all manner of ſickneſs and diſeaſe:" but we may "go about doing good," as he did, ſo far as we have ability and opportunity; we may comfort thoſe in their ſickneſs and diſtreſs, whom we are not able in a miraculous manner to recover and relieve; and in diſeaſes that are curable, we may help the poorer at the expence of our charity, and do that by flower and ordinary means, which our SAVIOUR did by a word in an inſtant.

Secondly,

Secondly, againſt the univerſality of our SAVIOUR's example, it is objected, that he hath given us no pattern of ſome conditions and relations of life, for which there ſeems to have been as great need and reaſon, as for any other. SERM. CXCI.

To this I anſwer, that though his ſingle ſtate of life did hinder him from being formally an example as to ſome of the moſt common relations, as of a father, and a huſband; yet he was virtually ſo in the principle and practice of univerſal charity, which principle, if it be truly rooted in us, will ſufficiently guide and direct us in the duties of particular relations.

And whereas it is further objected, that he hath left us no example of that, which by many is eſteemed the only religious ſtate of life, viz. perfect retirement from the world, for the more devout ſerving of GOD, and freeing us from the temptations of the world, ſuch as is that of monks and hermits; this perhaps may ſeem to ſome a great overſight and omiſſion: but our LORD in great wiſdom thought fit to give a pattern of a quite different ſort of life, which was, not to fly the converſation of men, and to live in a monaſtery or a wilderneſs; but to do good among men, to live in the world with great freedom, and with great innocency. He did indeed ſometimes retire himſelf, for the more free and private exerciſe of devotion; as we ought to do: but he paſs'd his life chiefly in the converſation of men, that they might have all the benefit that was poſſible, of his inſtruction and example. We read that "he was "carried into the wilderneſs to be tempted;" but not that he lived there, to avoid temptation. He hath given us an example of denying the world, without

SERM. CXCI. leaving it; and of renouncing not only the pomp and vanity, but even the lawful enjoyments and conveniencies of life, when it may ſerve to any good end, either of glory to GOD, or of advantage to men; teaching us hereby, that charity is a duty, no leſs neceſſary than devotion; that we cannot ſerve GOD better, than by endeavouring the good and happineſs of men. So that if our SAVIOUR's example be of authority with us, that will ſoon decide which is the moſt perfect ſtate of life, to go out of the world, or to live innocently and uſefully in it. And ſince neither our SAVIOUR, nor his apoſtles, have recommended it to us, by their example, nor by one word of precept or counſel tending that way, it ſeems very plain, that they did not eſteem monkery the moſt perfect, much leſs the only religious ſtate of life. There could not have been ſo deep a ſituation throughout the new teſtament concerning ſo important a piece of religion, as the church of Rome would bear us in hand this is: for to be profeſs'd of ſome monaſtical order they call "entering "into religion," and they ſpeak of it, as the moſt direct and ready way to heaven; and not only ſo, but they give fair encouragement to believe, that to die, or be buried in a monk's habit, will go a great way, (they are loth to tell us how far) in the carrying of a bad man towards heaven, or at leaſt to the abatement of his pain in purgatory.

Thirdly, it is objected, that ſome particulars of our SAVIOUR's carriage towards rulers and magiſtrates ſeem liable to exception, and not proper for our imitation; as his bold and free reproofs of the Scribes and Phariſees, many of whom were chief rulers, and of greateſt authority among them; and his

his meſſage to Herod, " go and tell that fox." SERM.
This opprobrious and reproachful treatment of ma- CXCI.
giſtrates, ſeems directly contrary to an expreſs law of GOD, Exod. xxii. 28. " Thou ſhalt not revile the " gods, or judges, nor ſpeak evil of the ruler of thy " people."

But to this the anſwer is plain, that our LORD uſed this freedom by the virtue and privilege of his prophetical office, and of his immediate commiſſion from GOD; it being the office of prophets, and a part of their commiſſion, to reprove kings and rulers with all freedom and plainneſs, becauſe they were really ſuperior to them in the execution of that office. In all poſitive laws of reſpect to ſuperiors, there is an exception of the divine commiſſion; becauſe in that caſe, the prophet ſpeaks in the name, and by the authority of one infinitely greater than the greateſt upon earth; as in the LORD's name, and by his commiſſion, any man may check inferior magiſtrates, and that in ſuch a manner as would be rudeneſs and inſolence for any other not ſo warranted, to do it. And of this there are manifold examples in the prophets of the old teſtament; and what the tenour of their commiſſion was, we may ſee in that given to the prophet Jeremiah, chap. i. ver. 10. " Behold, I have ſet thee over the nations, and " over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull up, " and to deſtroy, and to throw down, to build and " to plant," (that is, to denounce judgment and calamities, or peace and proſperity to them) and ver. 17, 18. " Thou therefore gird up thy loins, and " ariſe, and ſpeak unto them all that I command " thee; be not diſmayed at their faces, leſt I con- " found thee before them. For behold I have made

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" thee this day a defenced city, and an iron pillar, " and braſen walls againſt the whole land, againſt " the kings of Judah, againſt the princes thereof, " againſt the prieſts thereof, and againſt the people " of the land." This commiſſion ſet him above them all in the diſcharge of his office: and therefore what our LORD did in this kind, by virtue of an extraordinary commiſſion, and the privilege of a prophet immediately ſent by GOD, is not to be drawn into example in ordinary caſes; for we may do that by ſpecial commiſſion from GOD, which the ordinary rules of duty and reſpect to princes and governors will by no means allow to be done.

The fourth and laſt objection is, that our bleſſed SAVIOUR does not ſeem to bear himſelf with that duty and reſpect towards his mother, which that relation ſeems to require. And to ſpeak according to the firſt appearance of things, this ſeems to be, of all other, the moſt exceptionable part of his life, and to require ſome particular and extraordinary reaſon, not ſo obvious at firſt ſight, for the vindication of it.

There are, to my beſt remembrance and obſervation, but five paſſages, in the hiſtory of our SAVIOUR's life, concerning his carriage towards his mother, and his diſcourſe with her, and of her; in all which he ſeems rather to treat her with ſome appearance of neglect, than with any great ſhew of reverence and reſpect. Not that we are to imagine, but that he did pay her an entire duty; for we know that " he fulfilled all righteouſneſs:" but for reaſons beſt known to his infinite wiſdom, he thought fit very much to conceal it in his publick behaviour, and to have as little notice taken of it in the hiſtory of his life.

And

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And the firſt paſſage is Luke ii. 48. when his parents having loſt him, at laſt "found him in the "temple diſputing among the doctors;" and his mother reproved him, "ſon, why haſt thou thus "dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have "ſought thee ſorrowing." He gives them this ſhort and obſcure anſwer, which they knew not what to make of, "how is it that ye ſought me? wiſt ye not "that I muſt be about my FATHER's buſineſs?" This happened when he was but "twelve years "old. And that we may not think, that during his minority, he did ordinarily aſſume this behaviour towards his parents, but only upon this firſt eſſay of his publick appearance, the evangeliſt purpoſely adds, ver. 51. that "he went down with his parents "to Nazareth, and was ſubject to them."

The ſecond paſſage is John ii. 4. when his mother deſiring him to work a miracle, at his firſt appearance and entrance upon his publick miniſtry, he takes occaſion to declare to her, that he was diſcharged from her conduct and government, and this in terms to all appearance of no great reſpect: "woman, what have I to do with thee? mine "hour is not yet come." Greg. Nyſſen reads both ſentences with an interrogation; "what have I to "do with thee? is not mine hour now come?" As if he had ſaid, "why doſt thou interpoſe in theſe "matters? is not the time come, that I am to "enter upon my office; and in the diſcharge of it, "to be directed by GOD, and none elſe?"

The third paſſage is Matth. xii. 47. when he was told that "his mother and his brethren ſtood with-"out, deſiring to ſpeak with him: who is my "mother," ſays he, "and who are my brethren?"

And

SERM. CXCI. And pointing to his diſciples, "behold my mother, "and my brethren; for whoſoever ſhall do the will "of my FATHER which is in heaven, the ſame "is my brother, and ſiſter, and mother." Here is but little appearance of regard; for we do not find, that he left the buſineſs he was about, to ſpeak with her when ſhe deſired it. Nor it ſeems did ſhe underſtand her power ſo well as the church of Rome hath done ſince, when (as is to be ſeen in ſome of their maſs-books) they addreſs to her in theſe terms, *jure matris impera redemptori*; "by the au-"thority of a mother, command the redeemer."

The fourth paſſage is not much different from the former, Luke xi. 27. When "a certain woman "ſaid to him, bleſſed is the womb that bare thee, "and the paps which thou haſt ſucked; he ſaid, "yea, rather bleſſed are they that hear the word of "GOD and keep it." He does not deny what was ſaid in honour of her; but turns his diſcourſe another way: and foreſeeing the danger of a ſuperſtitious veneration of her, he ſeems to bring her down to the ſame level with all ſincere chriſtians; teaching us, that no external privilege or relation, how glorious ſoevever, no not of that of being the mother of the SON of GOD, was ſo valuable, as doing the will of GOD. "Yea, rather bleſſed are they that hear "the word of GOD, and keep it."

The laſt paſſage is at the time of his death, John xix. 25, 26, 27. "Now there ſtood by the croſs of "JESUS his mother: when JESUS therefore ſaw "his mother, and the diſciple ſtanding by, whom "he loved, he ſaith unto his mother, woman, be-"hold thy ſon: then ſaith he to the diſciple, "behold thy mother. And from that hour that

" diſciple took her unto his own home." Here in- SERM.
deed he ſhewed his great kindneſs and concernment CXCI.
for her, in committing her to the care of his beſt
beloved friend; but yet without any extraordinary
demonſtration of reſpect in the manner of it.

Theſe are all the paſſages I know in the goſpel,
which concern our LORD's carriage towards his
mother, which, upon the whole matter, is ſo ſtrange,
that we cannot imagine but there muſt be ſome ſpe-
cial and extraordinary reaſon for it: and we who
have lived to ſee and know what hath happened in
the chriſtian world, are now able to give a better
account of this great caution and reſervedneſs in
his behaviour towards her; namely, that out of his
infinite wiſdom and foreſight, he ſo demeaned him-
ſelf toward her, that he might lay no temptation be-
fore men, nor give the leaſt occaſion to the idoliz-
ing of her. He always called her "woman;"
and by the privilege of his divinity and high office,
rudly ſeems to pay her the reſpect due to a mo-
ther, that he might reſtrain all chriſtians from wor-
ſhipping her as a deity; or if they did, that they
might have no colour or excuſe for it, from any
thing he ſaid or did. This is ſo probable an ac-
count of that which might otherwiſe ſeem ſo unac-
countable, that I perſuade myſelf, that all unpre-
judiced perſons will readily aſſent to it. And which
farther remarkable in this matter, the apoſtles of
our LORD in all their writings uſe the ſame re-
ſervedneſs; and no doubt, by the direction of the
ſame SPIRIT, concerning the bleſſed mother of
our LORD. For, throughout the hiſtory of the
acts, and all the epiſtles of the apoſtles, there is
but once mention made of her, and that only by
the

SERM. CXCI. the by, Acts i. 14. where it is said, that "the disciples all continued with one accord in prayer and "supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of JESUS." So far are they from proposing her for an object of our worship, that they only once make mention of her, and that joining with others in prayer and supplication to GOD, without any special remark concerning her; much less do they speak of any devotion paid to her.

And surely if this "blessed among women, the "mother of our LORD," (for I keep to the titles which the scripture gives her) have any sense of what we do here below, she cannot but look down with the greatest disdain upon that sacrilegious and idolatrous worship which is paid to her, to the high dishonour of the great GOD and our SAVIOUR, and the infinite scandal of his religion. How can she, without indignation, behold how they play the fool in the church of Rome about her; what an idol they make of her image; and with what sottishness they give divine honour to it? how they place her in their idolatrous pictures in equal rank with the blessed trinity, and turn the salutation of the angel, *Ave Maria*, "hail Mary, full of grace," into a kind of prayer; and in their bead-roll of devotion repeat it ten times, for once that they say the LORD's prayer, as of greater virtue and efficacy? and indeed they almost justle out the devotion due to almighty GOD, and our blessed SAVIOUR, by their endless idolatry to her.

So that the greater part of their religion, both publick and private, is made up of that which was no part at all of the religion of the apostles and primitive christians; nay, which plainly contradicts it: for that expressly

expreſly teaches us, that there is but one object of our prayers, and one mediator by whom we are to make our addreſſes to GOD. "There is one "GOD; and one mediator between GOD and "man, the man CHRIST JESUS," ſays St. Paul, when he gives a ſtanding rule concerning prayer in the chriſtian church. And yet notwithſtanding all the care that our bleſſed SAVIOUR and his apoſtles could take, to prevent the groſs idolatry of the bleſſed mother of our LORD, how blindly and wilfully have the church of Rome run into it? and in deſpite of the cleareſt evidence and conviction, do obſtinately and impudently perſiſt in it, and juſtify themſelves in ſo abominable a practice. I come now to the



V. And laſt advantage of our LORD's example, that it is in the nature of it very powerful, to engage and oblige all men to the imitation of it.

It is almoſt equally calculated for perſons of all capacities and conditions, for the wiſe and the weak, for thoſe of high and low degree; for all men are alike concerned to be happy. And the imitation of this example, is the moſt ready and direct way to it, the moſt effectual means we can uſe to compaſs this great and univerſal end; nay, it is not only the means, but the end, the beſt and moſt eſſential part of it. To be like our LORD, is to be as good as it is poſſible for men to be; and goodneſs is the higheſt perfection that any being is capable of; and the perfection of every being is its happineſs.

There is a kind of contagion in all examples; men are very apt to do what they ſee others do, though it be very bad: every day's experience furniſheth us with many and ſad inſtances of the influence

SERM. CXCI.

fluence of bad examples; but there are peculiar charms in that which is good and excellent. A perfect pattern of goodneſs does ſtrongly allure and invite to the imitation of it, and a great example of virtue, to a well-diſpoſed mind is a mighty temptation, and apt to inſpirit us with good reſolutions, to endeavour after that in ourſelves, which we ſo much eſteem and admire in others. And ſuch is the example of our LORD, perfect as is poſſible, and yet obvious to common imitation, and as much fitted for the general direction of mankind, in all ſorts of virtue and goodneſs, as any one ſingle example can be imagined to be.

The virtues of his life are pure, without any mixture of infirmity and imperfection. He had humility without meanneſs of ſpirit; innocency without weakneſs; wiſdom without cunning; and conſtancy and reſolution in that which was good, without ſtiffneſs of conceit, and peremptorineſs of humour: in a word, his virtues were ſhining without vanity, heroical without any thing of tranſport, and very extraordinary without being in the leaſt extravagant.

His life was even and of one tenour, quiet, and without noiſe and tumult, always employed about the ſame work, in doing the things which pleaſed GOD, and were of greateſt benefit and advantage to men. Who would not write after ſuch a copy; ſo perfect, and yet ſo familiar, and fit for our imitation? who would not be ambitious to live the life which GOD lived, when he was pleaſed to become man and dwell among us?

We are ambitious to imitate thoſe whom we eſteem, and are apt to have their example in great dearneſs and

and regard, from whom we have received great kindneſs and mighty benefits. This pattern, which our religion propoſeth to us, is the example of one whom we ought to reverence, and whom we have reaſon to love above any perſon in the world; 'tis the example of our LORD and maſter, of our ſovereign and our SAVIOUR, of the founder of our religion, and of "the author and finiſher of our faith;" it is an example that carries authority with it, and commands our imitation. "You call me LORD "and maſter," ſays he himſelf, recommending to us the example of his own humility, John xiii. 13, 14. "You call me LORD and maſter, and ye ſay "well; for ſo I am. If I then your LORD and "maſter have waſhed your feet, ye ought alſo to "waſh one another's feet," that is, ſtoop to the loweſt and meaneſt office to ſerve one another; "for "I have given you an example, that ye ſhould do "as I have done to you." SERM. CXCI.

Yet farther, 'tis the example of our beſt friend and greateſt benefactor, of him who laid down his life for us, and ſealed his love to us with his own blood; and while we were bitter enemies to him, did and ſuffered more for us, than any man ever did for his deareſt friend. How powerfully muſt ſuch a pattern recommend goodneſs, and kindneſs, and compaſſion to us, who have had ſo much comfort and advantage from them? had not the SON of GOD commiſerated our caſe, and pitied and relieved us in our low and wretched condition, we had been extremely and for ever miſerable, beyond all imagination, and paſt all remedy. All the kindneſs and compaſſion, all the mercy and forgiveneſs he would have us practiſe towards one another, he himſelf firſt exerciſed

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exerciſed upon us; and ſurely we have a much greater obligation upon us to the practice of theſe virtues, than he had. For he did all this for our ſakes; we do it for our own. We have a natural obligation, both in point of duty and intereſt: his was voluntary, and what he took upon himſelf, that he might at once be a SAVIOUR and an example to us. He that commands us to do good to others, was our great benefactor; he that requires us to forgive our enemies, ſhed his own blood for the forgiveneſs of our ſins; while we were enemies to him, laid down his life for us, making himſelf the example of that goodneſs, which he recommends us to ſhew to others.

Are any of us reduced to poverty and want? let us think of him, who "being LORD of all, had "not where to lay his head; who being rich, for our "ſakes became a beggar, that we through his po- "verty might be made rich." Are we perſecuted for righteouſneſs ſake, and exerciſed with ſufferings and reproaches? "Let us run with patience the race "which is ſet before us, looking unto JESUS, the "author and finiſher of our faith; who for the joy "that was ſet before him, endured the croſs, de- "ſpiſing the ſhame."

When we are ready to be diſcouraged in well-doing, by the oppoſition we meet withal from the ingratitude of men, and the malicious interpretation of our good actions, perverting the beſt things, done with the beſt mind and to the beſt ends, to ſome ill purpoſe and deſign, "conſider him who endured "ſuch contradiction of ſinners againſt himſelf, leſt "you be weary and faint in your minds."

Can we be proud; when the SON of GOD "hum- "bled himſelf and became of no reputation; emptied him-

" himſelf " of all his glory, and was contented SERM.
" to be deſpiſed and rejected of men ?" ſhall we be CXCI.
covetous, and thirſt after the things of this world; when we conſider how the SON of GOD deſpiſed them, and trampled upon them ? ſhall we contemn and deſpiſe the poor; nay, can we chooſe but eſteem them for his ſake, whom they reſemble, and whoſe low and indigent condition in the world hath made poverty, not only tolerable, but glorious ? can we be peeviſh and froward, and apt to fly out into paſſion upon every little occaſion; when we conſider the meekneſs of the SON of GOD, and with what ſerenity and evenneſs of mind he demeaned himſelf, under great and continual provocations ? ſhall we be diſcontented in any condition; when we conſider how contented the SON of GOD was in the meaneſt and moſt deſtitute condition; how he welcomed all events, and was ſo perfectly reſigned to the will of his heavenly FATHER, that whatſoever pleaſed GOD, pleaſed him ? ſhall we be ſo ready to ſeparate from the communion of the church of GOD, upon pretence of ſomething that we think amiſs, or leſs pure and perfect; (which will always be in this world) when the SON of GOD lived and died in the communion of a church guilty of great corruptions both in doctrine and practice, ſuch as can with no colour be objected to ours ?

Shall we reſent injuries, ſlanders and calumnies ſo heinouſly, as to be out of all patience; when we conſider with what meekneſs of temper, and how little diſturbance of mind the SON of GOD bore all theſe ? how " he gave his back to the ſmiters, " and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair, " and with-held not his face from ſhame and ſpit- " ting ? how he was led as a lamb to the ſlaughter,

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" and as the ſheep before the ſhearer is dumb, ſo he " opened not his mouth; being reviled, he reviled " not again, when he ſuffered he threaten'd not; " but committed himſelf to him that judgeth righ- " teouſly?" ſuch vile and barbarous uſage the Son of GOD met withal; and yet under all this, he " poſſeſs'd his ſoul in patience:" and do we expect to be better treated than he was? was goodneſs itſelf contented to be traduced, and evil ſpoken of, perfect innocence to be ſlander'd and perſecuted: and ſhall we who are ſinners, great ſinners, think ourſelves worthy to eſcape theſe things, and too good to have that done to us, which was done to one infinitely better than we are? it is our LORD's own argument, and there is great weight and reaſon in it; " if the world hate you, ye know, that it hated " me, before it hated you. Remember the word " that I ſaid unto you, the ſervant is not greater than " the LORD. If they have perſecuted me, they " will alſo perſecute you; it is enough for the diſ- " ciple, that he be as his maſter, and the ſervant as " his LORD: if they have called the maſter of the " houſe Beelzebub, how much more ſhall they call " them of the houſhold?"

Can we entertain thoughts of revenge, when we have ſuch a pattern of forgiving before us, who poured out his blood for the expiation of the guilt of them that ſhed it, and ſpent his laſt breath in fervent and charitable prayers for his betrayers and murderers? " LORD, endow us with the like temper: but do " not try us with the like ſufferings?"

Thus by ſetting the example of our LORD before us, and keeping this pattern always in our eye, we may continually correct all our own errors and defects,

all the diſtempers of our minds, and the faults and irregularities of our lives; we may argue ourſelves into all kind of virtue and goodneſs, and from ſuch an example be ſtrongly excited, and ſweetly led to the practice of it.

Let us not be diſcouraged by the conſideration of our own weakneſs, for he who hath given us ſuch an example of virtue, is ready likewiſe to give us his HOLY SPIRIT, to aſſiſt and enable us to conform ourſelves to this pattern of our LORD and maſter, and to follow the bleſſed ſteps of his holy life.

" Now the GOD of peace," &c.

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# SERMON CXCII.

## The ſufferings of CHRIST conſider'd, as a proper means of our ſalvation.

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1 COR. i. 23, 24.

*But we preach* CHRIST *crucified, unto the Jews a ſtumbling-block, and unto the Greeks fooliſhneſs; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks,* CHRIST *the power of* GOD, *and the wiſdom of* GOD.

THE ſufferings of the SON of GOD for the ſins of men, as they are a ſubject never improper to be inſiſted on, ſo are they more eſpecially ſeaſonable at this time, * which the chriſtian church hath for ſo many ages ſet apart for the

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*Preach'd on Good-Friday.

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the ſolemn commemoration of them, in order to our more due preparation for receiving the ſacrament at Eaſter; which next after the LORD's-day (which was ſet apart by the apoſtles for a weekly commemoration of our SAVIOUR's reſurrection) is the firſt and moſt ſolemn feſtival that is taken notice of in eccleſiaſtical antiquity, to be generally obſerved by chriſtians; at which time all chriſtians that were admitted to thoſe ſacred myſteries, did receive the holy ſacrament; and for this reaſon, I have pitched upon this ſubject at this time.

Among all the prejudices that were raiſed againſt the chriſtian religion, when it firſt appeared in the world, this was the greateſt of all other, that the firſt author of this doctrine ſhould come to ſo miſerable and ſhameful an end, as to die upon the croſs; that "SON of GOD ſhould be delivered in- "to the hands of men," to be ſo cruelly and ignominiouſly handled. This both Jews and Greeks laid hold on, as the moſt popular objection againſt chriſtianity, and matter of juſt reproach to that religion, which pretended to be brought from heaven by the SON of GOD: for though he called himſelf the SON of GOD, yet he died like a man; and not only ſo, but ſuffered as a malefactor.

But, notwithſtanding the odium of this objection, the apoſtles of our LORD and SAVIOUR, who were ſent by him to publiſh his doctrine to the world, did not in the leaſt endeavour to hide and diſſemble the matter; but did openly, and without diſguiſe, declare to the world, that he in whom they believed, and endeavoured to perſuade others to believe, was, for "ſpeaking the truth, which he had "heard from GOD, arraigned at Jeruſalem, and

"there

" there by wicked hands crucified and ſlain." And though they knew that this ſeemed very fooliſh and abſurd, both to Jews and Gentiles, whom they deſigned to convert to chriſtianity, and did extremely prejudice them againſt it; yet nevertheleſs they perſiſted in the courſe they had begun, leaving GOD to do his own work, in his own way; and they found the ſucceſs of it. For though it was a very plain ſtory which they told the world, and appeared even ridiculous to thoſe who thought themſelves the wiſeſt and beſt judges of theſe matters; yet being the truth of GOD, it had a mighty efficacy upon the minds of men, notwithſtanding all the prejudice that was raiſed againſt it. " It pleaſed GOD by the fooliſhneſs of " preaching, to ſave them that believe;" by this doctrine, which ſeemed ſo abſurd to human reaſon, to gain many to the belief and entertainment of it. SERM. CXCII.

Indeed it was not ſuited to the genius either of the Jews or Gentiles; for they, according to their different ways of inſtitution, expected quite another thing. Ver. 22. " The Jews require a ſign, and the Greeks " ſeek after wiſdom." " The Jews require a ſign;" they expected the apoſtles ſhould have given ſome extraordinary teſtimony from heaven, ſuch as was Elias his calling for fire down from heaven, to conſume thoſe that oppoſed and reſiſted them. Such things as theſe they read of the prophets in their law, and they expected the Meſſias would do the ſame, and greater things. And though in truth he did ſo, wrought more and greater miracles than Moſes and all the prophets had done before him, yet their curioſity was not ſatisfied; and notwithſtanding the great works which he did among them, they were continually importuning him for a ſign; Matth. xii. 38.

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" Then certain of the Scribes and Phariſees anſwered, " ſaying, maſter, we would ſee a ſign from thee." This ſeems a ſtrange and unreaſonable demand, conſidering the many and great works he had done among them, which were ſo generally known. So that in all probability, it was ſome particular and peculiar kind of miracle which they deſired, as appears from Matth. xvi. 1. " The Phariſees alſo with the " Sadducees came, and tempting, deſired him, that " he would ſhew them a ſign from heaven." He had wrought many miracles on earth, in healing the ſick, and opening the eyes of the blind, and the ears of the deaf, in cleanſing the lepers, and making the lame to walk; but theſe they looked upon as an inferior ſort of miracles, here was all this while no extraordinary thing immediately " from heaven," if they could once ſee " that," they would be ſatisfied. But when no ſuch thing was done, and at laſt GOD permitted him to die upon the croſs, as an impoſtor and ſeditious perſon; and it appeared plainly that he, who pretended to free others from diſeaſes, could not ſave himſelf from death: this confirmed then in their unbelief, and upon good reaſon as they thought. And that this was a ſign which the particularly expected, and thought they had cauſe ſo to do, appears by their upbraiding of him with the want of it in the time of his ſuffering, Matth. xxvii. 39. " And " they that paſſed by reviled him, wagging their " heads, and ſaying, thou that deſtroyeſt the temple, " and buildeſt it up in three days, ſave thyſelf; if " thou be the SON of GOD, come down from " the croſs." And it was not only the malice and ignorance of the common people that objected this to him; but even the prieſts, and ſcribes, and elders, inſiſted

inſiſted upon the ſame thing; ver. 41, 42, 43. "Like- SERM.
"wiſe alſo the chief prieſts mocking him, with the CXCII.
"ſcribes and elders, ſaid, he ſaved others, himſelf
"he cannot ſave: if he be the king of Iſrael, let
"him now come down from the croſs, and we will
"believe him. He truſted in GOD; let him deli-
"ver him now, if he will have him: for he ſaid, I
"am the SON of GOD." By this paſſage you ſee what it was the Jews expected; that if our SAVIOUR had been "the SON of GOD," he ſhould have "ſaved himſelf;" when they went about to crucify him, that GOD ſhould have reſcued him out of their hands, and given ſome extraordinary teſtimony from heaven to his innocency; and for this reaſon, the preaching of "CHRIST crucified" was very offenſive to them: "the Jews require a "ſign; but we preach CHRIST crucified."

Such was the temper and diſpoſition of the Jews: but now the Gentiles, according to their way of inſtitution, expected that the apoſtles ſhould have diſcourſed to them upon philoſophical principles, and have demonſtrated things to them in their way. "The "Greeks ſeek after wiſdom;" they were great ſearchers after wiſdom and knowledge, and they valued nothing but what had the appearance of it, and what was delivered with great ſharpneſs of wit and reaſoning, and ſet off with art and eloquence. Had the apoſtles pretended to ſome new theory of natural or moral philoſophy, and diſcourſed to them about the firſt principles of all things, about the chief good, or about the nature of the ſoul, they would have heard him with great patience and delight. Nothing but deep and ſubtle ſpeculations, about theſe kind of arguments, did reliſh with them and pleaſe

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their palates. But the hiſtory of our SAVIOUR, his life and death, and reſurrection, and the plain precepts of his doctrine, were dry and inſipid things to them, and were ſo far from having a ſhew of wiſdom and philoſophy, that they appeared fooliſh and ridiculous to them.

But the deſign of GOD in the chriſtian religion, being not to pleaſe the humour, and gratify the curioſity of men; but really to do them good, and to reform the manners of mankind, he uſed quite another method; which how offenſive ſoever it might be to thoſe who thought themſelves wiſe, yet it was really the wiſeſt and moſt powerful means to that end: ſo the apoſtle tells us here in the text; "but we "preach CHRIST crucified, to the Jews a ſtumb-"ing-block, and to the Greeks fooliſhneſs: but "unto them that are called," that is, to thoſe whoſe minds are duly prepared to conſider things impartially, and to receive the truth, "the power of GOD, "and the wiſdom of GOD;" a moſt wiſe and powerful means to reform the world, an eminent inſtance of the divine power and wiſdom.

In theſe words we have theſe two things conſiderable:

Firſt, the exception which the world took at the doctrine of the goſpel, upon account of our SAVIOUR's ſufferings: "CHRIST crucified was to "the Jews a ſtumbling-block, and to the Greeks "fooliſhneſs."

Secondly, that notwithſtanding the ſeeming unreaſonableneſs and abſurdity of it, it was a moſt wiſe and effectual contrivance for the end to which it was deſigned and appointed: "But unto them which "are called, both Jews and Greeks, CHRIST the "power

"power of GOD, and the wiſdom of GOD." I ſhall ſpeak ſomething to each of theſe, as briefly and plainly as I can. I begin with the

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Firſt, the exception which the world took at the doctrine of the goſpel, upon account of our SAVIOUR's ſufferings. The world were generally offended at it, but not all upon the ſame account; the Jews took one kind of exception againſt it, and the Heathen another. "We preach CHRIST crucified, unto the Jews a ſtumbling-block, and unto "the Greeks fooliſhneſs." They were both offended at the ſame thing, the low and ſuffering condition of our SAVIOUR; but not upon the ſame reaſon. The Jews thought, that this mean appearance and condition of our SAVIOUR, was unſuitable to the power of GOD; and the Heathen, that it was not agreeable to the wiſdom of men.

The Jews from the tradition of their fathers, to which (juſt as the church of Rome does now-a-days) they paid a greater reverence, than to the written word of GOD, were poſſeſs'd with a ſtrong perſuaſion, that the Meſſias whom they expected, and was foretold by the prophets, was to be a great temporal prince, to appear in great ſplendor and glory, to be a mighty conqueror, and not only to free them from the Roman yoke, which they were then under; but to ſubdue all nations to them, and ſo bring them under their dominion and government. And this did ſo generally prevail among them, that even the diſciples of our SAVIOUR were as ſtrongly poſſeſs'd with this conceit, as any of the reſt; inſomuch that the mother of James and John made it her ſolemn requeſt to our SAVIOUR, that "her two ſons "might ſit, one on his right hand and the other on "his

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" his left, in his kingdom." And though he had
his diſciples juſt before, that " he muſt go up to
" ruſalem, and ſuffer many things of the ſcribes
" phariſees, and be betrayed and put to deat
yet the other conceit of his temporal dominion
greatneſs did ſo poſſeſs their minds, that they c
" not underſtand this ſaying, and it was hid from t
" that they perceived it not," as St. Luke tells
Luke ix. 45. Nay, even after his death and re
rection, when he appeared to them, this ſtill ſt
in their minds, as appears by that queſtion which
aſk'd him immediately before his aſcenſion, Acts
" When they were come together, they aſk'c
" him, LORD, wilt thou at this time reſtore a
" the kingdom to Iſrael?" They took it for gran
the Meſſias would do it one time or other, and
enquire of him, whether that were the time.

So that the Jews being ſo firmly fix'd in this
ceit of the temporal reign of the Meſſias, notl
could be a greater ſtumbling-block to them, than
mean and ſuffering condition, in which our
VIOUR appeared. The meanneſs of his birth
life was a great objection againſt him; but w
they ſaw him put to death ſo ignominiouſly, and
he did not then ſhew his glory and power, to
himſelf from that cruel and ſhameful death, they c
rather believe any thing than that this was the M
ſias foretold, and whom they had ſo long expe
They made full account that the Meſſias, when
he came, would live in great ſplendor and glory,
do great things for the advantage and honour of t
nation; the leaſt they expected from him, was t
deliverance from the Roman yoke, and the
bliſhing of the throne of David for ever; or if

begin

beginning had been obſcure, that he would at laſt break forth in great luſtre and majeſty; or, if they could have ſuppoſed that the Meſſias ſhould be perſecuted, and condemned, and nailed to the croſs, yet they doubted not but then GOD would have given teſtimony to him by ſome ſign from heaven, and have reſcued him from the croſs in a miraculous manner: but ſeeing nothing of all this, nothing but poverty and meanneſs, reproach and ſuffering attending him, they concluded, whatever miracles he pretended to, this could not be the SON of GOD, the true Meſſias. SERM. CXCII.

On the other ſide, the heathen philoſophers, who were not poſſeſs'd with thoſe conceits about the Meſſias, they were offended at the unreaſonableneſs and folly, as they thought, of the apoſtle's doctrine, who went about to perſuade the world, that a man who had lately ſuffered and was crucified at Jeruſalem, was a great prophet come into the world; nay, the SON of GOD, in whom all men ought to believe, and by whom they ought to hope for life and ſalvation: as if it were reaſonable to think, that GOD would have expoſed the moſt innocent and virtuous perſon that ever was, to ſo great reproach and ſufferings, that the SON of GOD ſhould die, and that life and immortality were to be hoped for from him, who was crucified and put to death. This they looked upon as a ſtory ſo ill framed, that to all wiſe and ſagacious men, it deſtroy'd its own credit and belief. For though they ſaid he was riſen again from the dead, yet before that could be entertained by men of philoſophical minds, there were many deep points to be determined, as concerning the nature of the ſoul, and whether it can ſubſiſt ſeparately from the body,

SERM. CXCII. body, and whether a body once dead can be reſtored to life again, and re-united to the ſoul?

And as for his doctrine, which the apoſtles pretended to deliver, it was a plain, and rude thing, without art or eloquence, nothing of deep ſpeculation, or ſtrict demonſtration in it: in ſhort, ſo far from being worthy of "a teacher come from GOD." that it was below the pitch of an ordinary philoſopher. Theſe and ſuch like things were, in all probability, the exceptions which the heathen philoſophers took at the apoſtles preaching, concerning our SAVIOUR's death, and his doctrine; and they had ſome colour in them.

But upon impartial examination, it will appear, that notwithſtanding theſe exceptions, the ſufferings of our SAVIOUR, conſidered with all the circumſtances that belong to them, were a very wiſe and effectual method made uſe of by almighty GOD, for the reforming and ſaving the world. Which brings me to the

Second thing I propounded to ſpeak to from theſe words, namely to vindicate the wiſdom of this deſign and contrivance of almighty GOD, for the ſalvation of mankind by the ſufferings of his SON, from the ſeeming abſurdity and unreaſonableneſs of it. "But "unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, "CHRIST the power of GOD, and the wiſdom "of GOD." And,

Firſt, the Jews had no ſufficient ground to be ſo much offended at the ſufferings of the MESSIAS. For,

I. They had no reaſon to expect that the MESSIAS ſhould be a great temporal prince, if they had attended to the predictions of their prophets concerning

him, which ought to have been their rule: for they affirm no ſuch thing of him. All that they ſay of him, plainly refers to a ſpiritual kingdom, that he ſhould "rule in righteouſneſs," that he ſhould "preach "the goſpel to the poor, and open the eyes of the "blind, and unſtop the ears of the deaf, and make "the lame walk;" that he ſhould "finiſh tranſ- "greſſion, and make an end of ſin, and make in- "terceſſion for iniquity, and bring in everlaſting "righteouſneſs." So that if they had not entertained a very groundleſs and carnal conceit concerning him, they could not ſo widely have miſtaken the ancient propheſies of him, which ought to have guided them in theſe matters, and which they might have ſeen all plainly fulfilled in the perſon of our SAVIOUR.



II. The predictions concerning him do moſt expreſly foretel his death and ſufferings, and that with very particular circumſtances: David in the xxiid Pſalm: Iſaiah quite throughout his liiid chapter. And Daniel does particularly point out the time when he ſhould be cut off. So that they had all the reaſon in the world to expect that the MESSIAS, when he came, ſhould be "deſpiſed and rejected of men, "a man of ſorrow and acquainted with grief," that he ſhould be "ſcourged and buffeted, oppreſſed and afflicted," and at laſt "cut off out of the land "of the living." Nay, if it had been otherwiſe, they had had no reaſon to have owned him for the true MESSIAS.

III. As for ſigns to evidence him to be the SON of GOD; though GOD did not gratify their curioſity as to the nature and manner of them, yet he gave the greateſt teſtimonies that ever were given to any prophet, and abundantly enough to ſatisfy any reaſonable

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ſonable man, that he was "a teacher come from GOD." Indeed his miracles were not generally ſo prodigious and amazing: but they were many and publick, they were uſeful and beneficial to mankind; and for that reaſon, more likely to come from GOD. He did not call for fire from heaven to deſtroy his enemies; but he gave ſight to the blind, and hearing to the deaf, and health to thoſe that were ſick of the moſt dangerous and inveterate diſeaſes, and (which was always reckon'd among the greateſt and moſt undoubted kind of miracles) life to the dead. And when he himſelf was put to death by the malice of the Jews, though he did not "come down from the "croſs," and was not reſcued from his ſufferings by an immediate hand from heaven, to triumph over the malice and cruelty which they were exerciſing upon him, (which was the miracle they required to be ſhown) yet GOD was not wanting to give teſtimony to him in a moſt remarkable manner, by prodigies which immediately follow'd his death; in the ſtrange darkneſs which came upon the land; in the terrible earthquake which rent the veil of the temple, and tore the rocks aſunder; in the opening of the graves, and the riſing of the dead; and laſtly, in his own miraculous reſurrection, the third day after he was crucified: ſo that here was no ſign wanting in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, to convince their obſtinacy and unbelief, unleſs it were that very ſign which they demanded. GOD did enough to ſatisfy every man's reaſon; and he is not wont to gratify the humour and curioſity of men. If men be ſo unreaſonable as to expect this from him, GOD lets ſuch men continue in their wilful blindneſs and infidelity.

Secondly,

Secondly, neither had the heathen philoſophers reaſon, upon account of the ſtory of our SAVIOUR's ſufferings, to look upon the goſpel as ſo abſurd and unreaſonable a thing; as will, I hope, evidently appear, if you will be pleaſed to conſider with me theſe following particulars:

I. That there is nothing more inculcated in the writings of the wiſeſt and moſt famous of the heathen philoſophers than this, that worldly greatneſs and proſperity is not to be admir'd, but deſpis'd by a truly wiſe man. Ariſtotle in his Ethicks, makes it the property of a magnanimous and great ſpirit, "not to admire greatneſs and power, and victory, "and riches." So that according to their own principles, our SAVIOUR was not to be deſpiſed upon account of his meanneſs and ſufferings. He might be a great prophet, and come from GOD, though he enjoy'd nothing of worldly greatneſs and proſperity.

II. They tell us likewiſe, that men may be very virtuous and good, and dearly beloved of GOD, and yet be liable to great miſeries and ſufferings. And to this purpoſe I could bring you almoſt innumerable teſtimonies out of the books of the philoſophers. Max. Tyrius the platoniſt, ſpeaking of Ulyſſes, ſays, that "the gods forced him to wander, and beg, and "wear rags, and ſuffered him to be reproach'd and "revil'd, for the love and friendſhip that they bare "to him." Epictetus, a poor ſlave, but inferior to none of all the philoſophers, for true virtue and wiſdom, "thanks the gods for his mean condition," and ſays, "he did not believe himſelf to be one jot "the leſs beloved by them, for that reaſon; and "that he was not caſt into a ſtate of poverty and "contempt,

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" contempt, becauſe the gods hated him, but that " he might be fit to be a witneſs to others."

III. They tell us likewiſe, that a ſtate of affliction and ſuffering is ſo far from rendring a man unfit to reform the world, and to be an example of virtue, that none ſo fit as thoſe that are in ſuch circumſtances. Arrian, in his diſſertations of Epictetus, deſcribing " a man fit to reform the world," whom he calls, " the apoſtle and meſſenger, the miniſter and " preacher of GOD to mankind," gives this character of him: " he muſt, ſays he, be without houſe and " harbour, and deſtitute of all worldly accommoda- " tions;" (juſt as it is ſaid of our SAVIOUR, " that " the SON of man had not where to lay his head;") " he muſt be armed with ſuch a patience by the " greateſt ſufferings, as if he were a ſtone and de- " void of ſenſe; he muſt be a ſpectacle of miſery " and contempt to the world." And to mention no more, Plato in the ſecond book of his commonwealth, when he would repreſent a righteous man, giving the moſt unqueſtionable teſtimony to the world of his virtue, " let him," ſays he, be ſtript of " all things in this world, except his righteouſneſs; " let him be poor and diſeaſed, and accounted a " wicked and unjuſt man; let him be whipp'd, and " tormented, and crucified as a malefactor; and yet " all this while retain his integrity;" which does ſo exactly agree with our SAVIOUR's condition, that had he not wrote before his time, one would have thought he had alluded to it.

IV. As it ſeems very convenient, (I am not ſo bold as to ſay it was neceſſary, and that GOD had no other way to bring about the ſalvation of men; for what are we, that we ſhould preſcribe to GOD, and

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ſet bounds to infinite wiſdom?) I ſay, as it ſeems very reaſonable, that, in order to our ſalvation, the SON of GOD, who was to be the author of it, ſhould become man, both that he might be an example of holineſs, and an expiation for ſin; and that he ſhould be born after the manner of other men, to ſatisfy us, that he was really of the ſame nature with us, that ſo he might converſe more familiarly with us, and might be a more eaſy, and encouraging, and imitable example of all holineſs and virtue; ſo likewiſe was it convenient that he ſhould be ſubject to the miſeries and ſufferings of our nature, that through the ſeveral ſtates and conditions of humanity, he might have an experimental knowledge of the ſufferings that humane nature is liable to; and from his own ſenſe of our infirmities might be a "more merciful and compaſſionate high-"prieſt." And this the apoſtle expreſly takes notice of, Heb. v. that it was convenient that "our "high-prieſt ſhould be taken from among men," that he might learn to be compaſſionate, by knowing experimentally what it was to be tempted and afflicted; the knowledge of experience being the ſtrongeſt motive and incitement to pity; and conſequently to give us the greater aſſurance of his tender affection to us. SERM. CXCII.

It was of great uſe, that he ſhould live in ſo mean and afflicted a condition, to confound the pride, and vanity, and fantaſtry of the world, and to convince men of theſe two great truths, that GOD may love thoſe whom he afflicts, and that men may be innocent, and virtuous, and contented, in the midſt of poverty, and reproach, and ſuffering. Had our bleſſed SAVIOUR been a great worldly prince,

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his influence and example might poſſibly have made more hypocrites and ſervile converts, but it would not have tended one whit to make men more inwardly good and virtuous. The great arguments that muſt do this, muſt be fetched not from the pomp and proſperity of this world, but from the happineſs and miſery of the other. Beſides, had our SAVIOUR appeared in any great power and ſplendor, the chriſtian religion could not have ſo clearly been acquitted from the ſuſpicion of a worldly intereſt and deſign.

And then the ſcripture aſſigns very plain and excellent reaſons of his ſuffering of death, that he might "make expiation for the ſins of the whole "world," that he might "take away ſin by the ſa-"crifice of himſelf," and put an end to that troubleſome and unreaſonable way of worſhip by ſacrifice, which was in uſe both among Jews and Heathens, and that by "conquering death, and him "that had the power of it, he might deliver thoſe, "who, through fear of death, were all their life-"time ſubject to bondage" as the apoſtle ſpeaks, Heb. ii. 14. For though the death of CHRIST, barely conſidered in itſelf, be far from an encouragement to us to hope for immortality; yet the death of CHRIST, conſidered together with his reſurrection from the dead, and his aſcenſion into heaven, is the cleareſt, and moſt ſenſible, and moſt popular demonſtration that ever was in the world, of another life after this, and a bleſſed immortality. So that conſidering our SAVIOUR roſe from the dead, it is far from being ridiculous, to rely upon one that died, for our hopes of immortality.

V. As

V. As for the plainneſs of our SAVIOUR's doc- SERM. CXCII.
trine and of the inſtruments whereby it was propagated, this is ſo far being an objection againſt it, that it is the great commendation of it. It contains a plain narrative of our SAVIOUR's life and miracles, and death, and reſurrection, and aſcenſion into heaven, and a few plain precepts of life; but the moſt excellent and reaſonable, and the freeſt from all vanity and folly, that are to be met with in any book in the world. And can any thing be more worthy of GOD, or more likely to proceed from him, than ſo plain and uſeful a doctrine as this? Lawgivers do not uſe to deliver their laws in eloquent language, to ſet them off with flouriſh of ſpeech, and to perſuade men to a liking of them by ſubtile and artificial inſinuations; but plainly, and in few words, to declare their will and pleaſure.

And for the inſtruments GOD was pleaſed to make uſe of for publiſhing of this doctrine, we grant they were generally rude and unlearned men, and our religion hath no reaſon to be aſhamed of it; for this was very agreeable to the ſimplicity of the whole deſign, that all things ſhould be managed in the plaineſt manner; that chriſtianity might be introduced in ſuch a way, as there might be no poſſible ſuſpicion of a humane contrivance, or worldly deſign in it.

The religion itſelf was ſimple and plain, there were no worldly inducements to the embracing of it, but all imaginable diſcouragements upon that account; the inſtruments of propagating it were ſimple and plain men, unaſſiſted by learning or art, by ſecular power and authority; which is ſo far from being a diſparagement to our religion, that it is a

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great reputation to it, and a plain evidence of its divine original, that it was from GOD, and was countenanced and carried on by him, "not by "might, nor by power, but by the SPIRIT of the "LORD."

And in truth, conſidering the nature of this doctrine, which conſiſted either of plain matter of fact, or of eaſy and familiar precepts and rules for a good life, the apoſtles were as fit for propagating of it, as any ſort of perſons in the world: for it did not require depth of underſtanding, or ſharpneſs of wit to comprehend it, and declare it to others; but honeſty and integrity of mind, zeal and induſtry to promote it; in which qualities the apoſtles excelled the philoſophers and beſt learned perſons in the world: and provided an inſtrument be ſufficient and competent for its end, it matters not how plain and unpoliſhed it be; for inſtruments are not intended for ornaments, but for uſe. Now the apoſtles of our SAVIOUR, though they were illiterate and unbred, were as competent witneſſes of matter of fact, as any other perſons: for there is no wit or learning required, to relate what a man hath ſeen and heard. Nay, the more ſimple and plain, the leſs eloquent and artificial any relation is, the more likely it is to be true, and to gain belief.

Thus you ſee, that notwithſtanding the ſeeming unreaſonableneſs and abſurdity of the doctrine of the goſpel, it is a moſt wiſe and effectual contrivance for the reforming and ſaving of mankind. "But "unto them that are called, both Jews and Gen-"tiles, CHRIST the power of GOD, and the "wiſdom of GOD."

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The proper inference from all this is, to ſtir us up to a thankful acknowledgment and admiration of the wiſdom and goodneſs of GOD, in the ſalvation of men by JESUS CHRIST. We are moſt apt to admire that wiſdom which finds out ſuch means to an end, as humane wiſdom would have been leaſt apt to deviſe, and hit upon; and yet the more we conſider them, the more we muſt approve their fitneſs. Such is the deſign of the recovery and redemption of mankind, by the death and ſufferings of the SON of GOD. However it may appear to raſh and inconſiderate men, who judge ſuperficially, and according to the uppermoſt appearances of things, to be a very unlikely and improbable deſign; yet upon a thorough and impartial examination of things, we ſhall find, that GOD's way is the wiſeſt, and that in the management of this deſign, he hath outdone the utmoſt prudence and wiſdom of men, and hath ordered things to infinitely more advantage, than they would have been, in any of thoſe methods which the ſhort and imperfect wiſdom of carnal men would have been moſt apt to pitch upon. Ignorant and conceited, and prejudiced men, may cenſure it for folly, but the angels, more intelligent and diſcerning creatures than we are, and of a deeper reach, do look upon it with wonder and aſtoniſhment. So the apoſtle tells us, 1 Pet. i. 12. where ſpeaking of the goſpel, he calls it a thing "which the angels deſire to look into." An alluſion to the cherubims, who looked earneſtly upon the mercy-ſeat which was over the ark, as if they would pry into it.

And then let us acknowledge the infinite goodneſs of GOD, in ſaving us by the death and ſufferings of

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his SON, us vile and miſerable ſinners. Had we been the moſt innocent and righteous, and the deareſt friends to him in the world, what could he have done more? how could he poſſibly have teſtified greater love to us, than "to give his SON to die "for us?" Here is goodneſs without bounds, love without parallel and example; for "greater love "than this hath no man, that a man ſhould lay "down his life for his friend." This is the higheſt pitch that humane affection ever attained to, to die for one's friend: "but herein hath GOD commended "his love to us, that while we were enemies, he "gave his SON to die for us."

This is that which we are to commemorate at this ſeaſon, and by the commemoration thereof, to prepare ourſelves for the receiving of the bleſſed ſacrament of his body and blood, which was broken and ſhed for us. The conſideration whereof, as it ſhould excite us to a hearty ſorrow and repentance for ſin, ſo ſhould it alſo inflame us with love to CHRIST, who by ſuffering ſuch things for us, hath laid upon us an eternal obligation of love and obedience to him. The remembrance of whoſe death ſhould not only put us into a preſent fit and paſſion of grief and love, but ſhould be the ground of laſting affections and reſolutions; the thoughts of what he hath done and ſuffered for us, ſhould make us ambitious to do or ſuffer any thing for him. What ſhould not we be willing to part with for him, who did not think his own life, and his glory dear to him for our ſakes? did he die for us? and ſhall we think much to live to him? did he become miſerable for our ſakes? and ſhall we think much to become holy and happy for his ſake and for our own?

Such

Such affections and holy reſolutions the conſideration of our SAVIOUR's death and ſufferings ſhould be apt to excite in us. What grief, what love, what thankfulneſs ſhould the remembrance of his dying love work in us! when we conſider ſeriouſly the many and mighty bleſſings and benefits which flow to us out of his wounds, and are taking "the cup "of ſalvation" into our hands, how ſhould "our "ſouls and all that is within us, bleſs his holy name, "who pardoneth all our iniquities, and healeth all "our diſeaſes; who redeemeth our life from deſtruc- "tion, and crowneth us with loving-kindneſs and "tender mercy. To him, therefore, our gracious "and good GOD, let us give all thanks, adoration, "and praiſe. Amen."

# SERMON CXCIII.

## The evidence of our SAVIOUR's reſurrection.

ACTS i. 3.

*To whom alſo he ſhewed himſelf alive after his paſſion, by many infallible proofs, being ſeen of them forty days, and ſpeaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of* GOD.

THESE words comprehend in ſhort the whole evidence of our SAVIOUR's reſurrection, which may be referred to theſe four heads: SERM. CXCIII.

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First, his appearance to them after his death and passion. "To whom also he shewed himself alive af-"ter his passion" "To whom;" that is, to the apostles, whom St. Luke had mentioned just before. "After he had given commandment to the apostles, "whom he had chosen; to whom also," &c.

Secondly, the proof of the reality of his appearance. "To whom also he shewed himself alive after "his passion, by many infallible proofs," ἐν πολλοῖς "τεκμηρίοις, *idque compluribus argumentis*, saith Erasmus, "and that by many certain and undoubted "proofs, or arguments."

Thirdly, the duration and continuance of his appearance to them. "Being seen of them forty "days."

Fourthly, the subject matter of his discourse with them. "And speaking of the things pertaining "to the kingdom of GOD." Each of these affords us a considerable evidence of CHRIST's resurrection.

First, his appearance to them after his death and passion. "To whom also he shewed himself alive af-"ter his passion." In which words, there are three things very considerable, and which give great evidence to our SAVIOUR's resurrection.

I. His appearance to his apostles.

II. That he was really alive, and his body vitally united to his soul.

III. And this after he was really dead, "after his "passion;" that is, after he was crucified, dead, and buried, he was raised to life again. I shall speak briefly of these.

I. His appearance to his apostles. "To whom al-"so he shewed himself alive." The apostles are here

only mentioned, becauſe this is here ſpoken of, in order to their deſignation and appointment to be the witneſſes of CHRIST's reſurrection to the world, as the great confirmation of that doctrine which they were to publiſh: but becauſe I am conſidering his appearance after his reſurrection, as an evidence of the truth of it, I ſhall therefore take in his appearance to others alſo of his diſciples and followers, and conſider likewiſe, why he only appeared to his own followers, and not alſo to the unbelieving Jews, who had put him to death, for the full conviction of his enemies and murderers, and the converſion of that whole nation, to whom he was primarily ſent. SERM. CXCIII.

In conſidering his ſeveral appearances, not only to his apoſtles, but to his other diſciples and followers, that I may give the ſhorteſt and fulleſt view of them, I ſhall take them as they are briefly ſumm'd up by St. Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 4, &c. where giving an account of the ſum of his doctrine among the Corinthians, he tells us, that the foundation of all his preaching was the death and reſurrection of CHRIST. "I delivered unto you firſt of all, that which "I alſo received, how that CHRIST died for our "ſins according to the ſcriptures, and that he was "buried, and that he roſe again the third day ac-"cording to the ſcriptures." And then follows the particular evidence of his reſurrection, ver. 5. "and "that he was ſeen of Cephas." St. Paul here takes no notice of his firſt appearance to the devout women, who brought ſpices and ointments to the ſepulchre, "Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary "the mother of James, and other women," as we find Luke xxiv. 10. The reaſon of which ſeems to be this, becauſe his firſt appearance was in conſidera-

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SERM. CXCIII. tion of their piety and affection to him, and of the weakneſs of their ſex, their faith being liable to be firſt ſtaggered; and they were only to relate it to the apoſtles, and to be honoured with carrying the firſt news of it, not to be witneſſes of it to the world; ſo that this appearance was only for the private confirmation of their faith, and therefore not particularly taken notice of by St. Paul among the publick evidences of CHRIST's reſurrection.

"He was ſeen of Cephas." This is mention'd Luke xxiv. 34. "The LORD is riſen indeed, and "hath appeared to Simon."

St. Paul goes on; "and then of the twelve." The college of the apoſtles, becauſe their number was twelve by our SAVIOUR's inſtitution, are moſt frequently called "the twelve," though at ſome meetings ſome one of them might perhaps be abſent: 'tis true there was a ſhort interruption by the miſcarriage of Judas, from the time of our SAVIOUR's apprehenſion to his aſcenſion, and then they are called "the eleven," as before and after they are called "the twelve;" yea at this firſt appearance of our SAVIOUR to them, when they were but "ten," Thomas being abſent, they are called "the "eleven," Mark xvi. 14. "He appeared to the "eleven, as they ſat at meat;" becauſe they were then but "eleven" in all. And indeed in this text of St. Paul, both the vulgar tranſlation, which certainly follows a very ancient copy, and St. Ambroſe there inſtead of "twelve," render it "eleven;" ſo that St. Paul probably means our SAVIOUR's firſt appearance to them, mentioned by St. Mark, where they are alſo called "the eleven," though Thomas was abſent; which is the reaſon why St. Paul ſays

ſays afterwards at the 7th verſe, that "he was "ſeen of all the apoſtles," that is, Thomas alſo being preſent, as I ſhall ſhew by and by. SERM. CXCIII.

"After that, he was ſeen by above five hundred "brethren at once." This was the moſt ſolemn appearance of all, mentioned Matth. xxviii. 10. and John xxi. 1. where our SAVIOUR appointed a general meeting of all his diſciples and followers. "Go "tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and "there they ſhall ſee me." Ver. 16. "They went into "Galilee, into a mountain, where JESUS had ap-"pointed them." This mountain, according to the ancient tradition, was mount Thabor.

There is one conſiderable difficulty concerning the greatneſs of this number of "five hundred;" namely, that after our SAVIOUR's aſcenſion, we find, Acts i. 15. that after their return from mount Olivet, (from whence our SAVIOUR aſcended) to Jeruſalem, the whole number of their meeting was but "an hundred and twenty," for ſo it is expreſly ſaid, "the number of the names together, were "about an hundred and twenty;" that is, of the perſons there met. Now we cannot reaſonably ſuppoſe, that any of thoſe "five hundred," who had ſeen him after his reſurrection, were fallen off from them.

For the clear ſolution of this, it is to be conſider'd, that the great meeting of "five hundred" was in Galilee, where our SAVIOUR's reſidence chiefly had been, and where he had preached moſt conſtantly, and by conſequence he had probably there the greateſt number of followers, which was the reaſon why he choſe to appear there, and appointed that place for the general meeting. After which, the apoſtles

SERM. CXCIII. apoſtles who went thither by our LORD's appointment, together with others who accompanied them from Jeruſalem, returned back: but his followers who lived in Galilee remained there; ſo that there might very well be "five hundred" at the meeting in Galilee, and but "an hundred and twenty" at Jeruſalem.

St. Saul goes on, ver. 7. "After that he was ſeen "of James." This particular appearance of our LORD to St. James, the brother of our LORD, is no where mentioned in the evangeliſts. St. Paul probably had it from the common tradition mentioned by St. Jerom, out of the Hebrew goſpel of the Nazarenes, in which are ſeveral paſſages omitted by St. Matthew, and this for one; "that our LORD, "immediately after he had ariſen, went and appeared "to James; for James had vowed that hour that he "drank of the cup of the LORD, (viz. in the ſa-"crament) he would not eat bread, till he ſaw him "riſen from the dead. The LORD, when he ap-"peared to him, ſaid, bring hither bread and a ta-"ble, and he took the bread and bleſſed, and brake "it, and gave it to James the juſt, and ſaid to him, "my brother, eat thy bread; for the SON of man "is riſen from among them that ſleep." To this tradition St. Paul probably alludes; but then ἔπειτα, which we tranſlate "afterwards or then," ought to de render'd, as it elſewhere is, *præterea*, "beſides, "moreover he appeared to James," without denoting the order of the time; for according to this tradition, it was preſently after his reſurrection, before he had appeared to the other apoſtles.

It follows, "then he was ſeen of all the apoſtles;" that is, by Thomas, as well as the reſt. And this

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was his ſecond appearance to the apoſtles together; SERM. CXCIII.
of which St. Luke gives us an account, Luke xxiv. 5. and St. John, chap. xx. 19.

" And laſt of all, he was, ſays St. Paul, ſeen of " me alſo, as an abortive, or one born out of due " time." This he ſpeaks of the appearance of our LORD to him, in his way to Damaſcus, whereby he was in a very powerful and extraordinary manner on a ſudden converted to chriſtianity.

Thus I have given you an account of the ſeveral appearances of our SAVIOUR, not only to the apoſtles, but to others, and have endeavoured to explain the chief difficulties relating to them; ſo that here is a very plentiful teſtimony of our SAVIOUR's appearance after his reſurrection. I proceed to the

IId Thing here obſervable, that our LORD was really alive when he thus appeared, and his body vitally united to his ſoul. " To whom alſo he ſhewed " himſelf alive." To which purpoſe there is a remarkable paſſage in Ignatius, in his epiſtle to the church of Smyrna, out of the ſame Hebrew Nazarene goſpel, " that CHRIST ſaid to Peter after his " reſurrection, behold, touch me, and ſee that I am " not a ſpirit that have aſſumed a body." For that was one great objection, that his body was not a real body united to his ſoul, but a thin airy body, ſuch as are aſſumed by ſpectres and apparitions. But the farther evidence of this, I refer to the ſecond general head, concerning the proofs of the reality of his appearance. I proceed to the

IIId Thing I obſerved, viz. that he appeared alive after he had been really dead. " To whom alſo he " ſhewed himſelf alive, after his paſſion," ſays the text;

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text; that is, after he was crucified, and dead, and buried, he was raiſed and reſtored to life again. And this likewiſe is neceſſary, to evidence the truth and reality of his reſurrection, that he was really dead. That this was ſo, we cannot doubt, whether we conſider the malice of the Jews, who would take care he ſhould be dead before he was taken from the croſs; or the manner of his death, his heart being pierced by the ſpear, which was evident from the water and blood which came out of his ſide, which ſhewed that his heart was mortally wounded; or the time of his being in the grave, which was part of three days.

And now if he was really dead, his reſtitution to life, which we call his reſurrection, muſt be miraculous; it being beyond any natural power, that we know of, to effect it.

As for that malicious tradition of the Jews, that he was ſtolen out of his grave by his diſciples, while the watch was aſleep, and given out to be riſen from the dead; beſides the undeniable proofs of his reſurrection, which I ſhall produce by and by, the evidence which theſe ſuborn'd witneſſes give of his diſciples ſtealing away his body, deſtroys itſelf; for they ſaid, "his diſciples came by night, and ſtole "him away, while he ſlept;" which amounts to no more, but that when they awaked his body was ſome way or other conveyed or gone out of the grave; which is conſiſtent with his reſurrection. But ſurely none will think fit to give credit to what they teſtify was done while they were aſleep. They are very willing to believe a thing, who will admit of ſuch a depoſition.

Thus

Thus much concerning our SAVIOUR's appear- SERM.
ance to his diſciples and followers, after his reſurrec- CXCIII.
tion. I ſhall briefly conſider, in the

Second place, why he only appeared to his own followers, and not alſo to the unbelieving Jews, who had put him to death, for the full conviction of his enemies and murderers, and the converſion of that whole nation to whom he was primarily ſent.

Of this matter, ſo far as is fit for us to enquire into the reaſon of the divine diſpenſations, this probable account may be given:

1. It was only of abſolute neceſſity, that thoſe who were to be the firſt publiſhers of the goſpel, and the witneſſes of his reſurrection to the world, ſhould have the utmoſt evidence and ſatisfaction concerning the reality of it: others might very ſoon credit it upon the teſtimony of ſo many witneſſes, who alſo gave evidence to the truth of their teſtimony, by the miracles which they wrought; and of their own ſincerity, by dying for this teſtimony. And thus St. Peter takes notice of the reaſon why our LORD after his reſurrection, did not appear to all the people, but only to ſelect witneſſes; becauſe his appearance was neceſſary only to thoſe, who were deſigned and appointed to be the witneſſes of it. If more had been neceſſary, he muſt by the ſame reaſon have appeared to all the world, as well as to the Jews: Acts x. 40, 41. "Him GOD raiſed up the third "day, and ſhewed him openly; not to all the peo- "ple, but to witneſſes choſen before of GOD, even "unto us, who did eat and drink with him after he "roſe from the dead; and he commanded us to "preach unto the people, and to teſtify," &c.

2. The

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2. The unbelieving Jews, eſpecially the chief prieſts and rulers, upon whoſe authority the people depended, were very unworthy, to whom GOD ſhould afford ſo extraordinary a way of conviction, who had already deſpiſed and rejected ſo great evidence as was offered to them: and not only ſo, but maliciouſly imputed the plaineſt miracles that ever were wrought amongſt them, to the power and operation of the devil. Now if any thing can render men incapable of the favour of farther means of conviction, ſuch a malicious reſiſtance of the evidence which our SAVIOUR'S miracles daily wrought among them, carried along with them, would probably do it; eſpecially if we conſider, that the greateſt of all the miracles which he wrought in his life-time (I mean, the raiſing of Lazarus from the dead, after he had been dead four days) was ſo far from convincing them, though they could not deny the thing, that from thence their malice took occaſion to reſolve to put him to death; John xi. 47. "Then gathered "the chief prieſts and phariſees a council, and ſaid, "what do we? for this man doth many miracles: "if we let him alone, all men will believe on him." And ver. 53. "Therefore from that day they took "counſel together to put him to death." Now was it reaſonable that he ſhould appear to them for their conviction, after he was riſen from the dead, who maliciouſly conſpired to compaſs his death, for this very cauſe, becauſe they knew that he had raiſed one from the dead?

3. This would have been inconſiſtent with that juſt puniſhment, which GOD had determined to bring upon the Jewiſh nation for their obſtinate infidelity, and malicious rejection, and cruel uſage of the SON of

of GOD. After fitting means uſed for the convic- SERM.
ion of men, it is juſt with GOD to let men remain CXCIII.
n their own obſtinate infidelity, and to puniſh them
or it. And it is not to be expected, that GOD
hould uſe violent and irreſiſtible means, to bring
uch perſons to repentance, and to prevent their ruin.
He pities the weakneſs and infirmities of honeſt
minds, and condeſcends to give them ſuch evidence
s it is reaſonable to demand, as he did to his
liſciples: but he hath not thought fit to provide ſo
xtraordinary a remedy for wilful and obſtinate in-
idelity; which was the caſe of the Scribes and
Phariſees.

Secondly, we will conſider the proofs of the reality of our SAVIOUR's appearance after his reſurrection: "to whom alſo he ſhewed himſelf alive after his "paſſion, by many infallible proofs, ἐν πολλοῖς τεκ- "μηρίοις, by many certain and undoubted proofs or "arguments;" for ſo the words properly ſignify, as Quintilian from Ariſtotle tells us; τεκμήρια, ſays he, are *indubitata & neceſſaria ſigna*, "undoubted and "neceſſary ſigns of a thing;" as the actions of ſpeak- ing, walking, eating and drinking, are the τεκμηρία, "undoubted ſigns" of life.

And theſe τεκμήρια, or "undoubted proofs" of our SAVIOUR's reſurrection, may be referr'd to theſe two heads, the natural, and the ſupernatural and miraculous evidences of the thing.

1. The natural evidence of the thing to their ſenſes; to their eyes, the quickeſt and ſureſt of ſenſes, when being leaſt apt to be deceived in thoſe things, *quæ ſunt oculis commiſſa fidelibus*, "which are com- "mitted to ſuch faithful witneſſes, as our own eyes." He was ſeen of all his diſciples, not once, but ſeve-

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ral times; not by a tranſient view and glance, but in a way of the moſt familiar converſation: he diſcourſed with them, and did eat and drink with them, and with the ſame circumſtances that he uſed in his life-time, he gave thanks, and brake bread with them: he ſuffer'd his body to be touch'd by them, that they might be convinced that it was a real body, conſiſting of fleſh and bones, Luke xxiv. 39. "Handle me, and "ſee; for a ſpirit hath not fleſh and bones, as ye "ſee me have."

And to convince them beyond all doubt and ſcruple, that the very ſame body was raiſed in which he had ſuffer'd, he gives them leave to handle the wounds of his hands and feet, Luke xxiv. 39. "Behold my "hands and my feet, that it is I myſelf." John xx. 19. "He ſhewed them his hands and his ſide." And to Thomas, who was more unbelieving than the reſt, he ſays in the preſence of them all, ver. 27. "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; "and reach hither thy hand, and thruſt it into my "ſide; and be not faithleſs, but believing." But beſides this natural ſenſible evidence, he gave them likewiſe,

2, A ſupernatural and miraculous evidence. St. John mentions two or three inſtances: his coming upon the ſudden on them, and "ſtanding in the "midſt of them, when the doors were ſhut." Not that he paſs'd through the door with his body, which is not a miracle, but a plain impoſſibility, and therefore juſt as fit to countenance tranſubſtantiation, as one impoſſibility is to prove another: but that he did miraculouſly open the door, and come upon them ſo quickly, as was undiſcernable to them; which every man will grant, not only to be poſſible, but

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eaſy to the divine power. But this way of our SAVIOUR's conveying himſelf into the midſt of his diſciples, though it be alſo miraculous, yet the church of Rome will by no means allow it; it is too plain, and eaſy to be reconciled with the nature and poſſibility of things; they love at their hearts "a lying "wonder," a foppiſh miracle. SERM. CXCIII.

And this miracle was repeated twice; firſt when Thomas was abſent, John xx. 19. and when he was preſent, the ſame was done again, ver. 26.

And then the miraculous draught of fiſhes, by which alſo he had made himſelf known to them in his life-time.

And then Peter's caſting himſelf into the ſea, when he knew it was he, in confidence of that divine power, which in the like kind he had experience of before.

Theſe miracles St. John mentions, but he tells us, chap. xx. 30. that "many other miracles JESUS "did in the preſence of his diſciples, which are not "ſet down in that book," The

Third thing in the text is the duration and continuance of his appearing to them, "being ſeen of "them forty days." And this is of great moment to confirm the reality of the thing: a man may for once be impoſed upon by an illuſion of fancy, in a thing which he vehemently deſires and expects, and which runs ſtrongly in his mind: but where there is time to examine things, and compare all circumſtances together, and to look narrowly into them, and to try them by ſeveral ſenſes, and at ſeveral times for ſo long a ſpace, it is morally, nay almoſt naturally impoſſible, that any one man in his ſenſes, much more ſo many hundreds of perſons, ſhould in ſuch circum-

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ſtances be groſly deluded in a plain ſenſible matter of fact.

Fourthly, and laſtly, here is the ſubject matter of our SAVIOUR's diſcourſe with his diſciples, "concerning things which pertain to the kingdom of "GOD;" or as it is in the verſe before, "after he "had by the HOLY GHOST, (which was not "given him by meaſure, as the evangeliſt tells us "elſewhere) given commandment to his apoſtles, "whom he had choſen:" that is, after he had given the full orders and inſtructions concerning the doctrine which they were to publiſh, and all other things pertaining to that ſpiritual kingdom, which he was ſetting up in the world: by the agreement of all which, with what he had ſaid to them in his life-time, they were more and more confirmed, that it was the very ſame perſon whom they had converſed with before, for above three years together. And yet in this diſcourſe concerning his kingdom, he reſerved, ſome things to be afterward revealed to them by the HOLY GHOST, according as he had promiſed, "that when the SPIRIT of truth was come, he "ſhould teach them all things," particularly concerning the ſpiritual nature of his kingdom, which they did not yet fully underſtand, as appears by that queſtion which they put to him, ver. 6. "LORD, "wilt thou at this time reſtore the kingdom unto "Iſrael?" They ſtill dreamed of a temporal kingdom in which our SAVIOUR would appear in great pomp and ſplendor, to ſubdue the world to them.

From all this diſcourſe which I have made, you ſee what evidence the apoſtles, who were to be the firſt publiſhers of the goſpel, and witneſſes of CHRIST's reſur-

eſurrection, had of the truth and reality of it; ſo plentiful, and clear and convincing, as nothing more could either be deſired or expected. And we have a credible relation of theſe things brought down to us, abundantly ſufficient to ſatisfy thoſe who are free from the bias of paſſion or intereſt, or the prejudice and prepoſſeſſion of a contrary religion, in which they have been educated and brought up; and ſufficient to gain ſome few ingenuous and teachable perſons here and there, who do more impartially conſider things; and though they have been educated in a contrary religion, yet have preſerved in themſelves a greater freedom of judgment than education does uſually leave in the minds of men. SERM. CXCIII.

But yet this credible relation of actions and miracles done long ago, how true ſoever in itſelf, does not carry ſo preſent, and ſenſible, and ſtrong a conviction with it, as to be able to bear down in the common people, the violent prejudice of education in a contrary religion, and conſequently is not likely to do any great matter of itſelf toward the converſion of infidel nations.

And therefore the divine wiſdom, which does nothing that is ſuperfluous and unneceſſary, thought fit not only to ſend the apoſtles armed with this evidence, which had abundantly convinced them, to teſtify the reſurrection of CHRIST to the world, but alſo to give an immediate teſtimony to them, by enabling them to work preſent miracles upon the ſpot, for the confirmation of their teſtimony. And this divine power which went along with them, was a ſenſible teſtimony and conviction both of the knowing and ignorant part of mankind, that they were teachers and witneſſes ſent by GOD; and therefore our LORD

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commands them, "not to depart from Jeruſalem, "till they had received power from on high," to qualify them to be witneſſes of CHRIST's reſurrection, not only in "Jeruſalem, and Judea, and Samaria," but to the utmoſt parts of the earth.

And this I ſtill believe to be the caſe of thoſe many nations of the world, that are yet under the violent, and almoſt invincible prejudice of education in another religion. That which may reaſonably ſatisfy us who are brought up in the chriſtian religion, is not likely to be effectual enough to convince them; and therefore, I think it ſtill very credible, that if perſons of ſincere minds did go to preach the pure chriſtian religion, free from thoſe errors and ſuperſtitions which have crept into it, to infidel nations, that GOD would ſtill enable ſuch perſons to work miracles, without which there would be little or no probability of ſucceſs. For as the wiſdom of GOD is not wont to do that which is ſuperfluous, ſo neither to be wanting in that which is neceſſary; and though the morality of the chriſtian religion be admirable, and very apt to recommend itſelf to the reaſon of mankind, yet the doctrine of the death of the SON of GOD would be ſuch a ſtumbling-block as would be hard for them to get over; and the relation of antient miracles would not eaſily be admitted, by thoſe who are utterly ſtrangers to our hiſtories of former times; and conſequently not ſo fit to judge of what credit and value they are.

It is not good to be confident where we are not certain; but this I piouſly believe, that GOD would extraordinarily countenance ſuch an attempt by all fitting aſſiſtance, as he did the firſt publication of the goſpel; becauſe the reaſon and neceſſity is plainly

the ſame in this caſe, as it was at firſt. For if GOD did not think the apoſtles naked teſtimony, unleſs it were armed with miracles, ſufficient for the conviction of the world, concerning the reſurrection of CHRIST, of which themſelves had been eye-witneſſes, much leſs can we expect to gain credit, who only carry the relation of theſe ancient matters of fact, atteſted by hiſtories to which they are wholly ſtrangers. SERM. CXCIII.

And I do ſtrongly hope, that there ſtill remains a great harveſt among the Gentiles, yet to be gain'd to chriſtianity before the end of the world; and that the providence of GOD will, in his own appointed time, make a farther ſtep in the converſion of the infidel nations; and that more of the kingdoms of the earth ſhall become the kingdoms of the LORD, and of his CHRIST; and yet that before the end of all things, the light of the goſpel ſhall be diſplay'd in a glorious manner, not only in thoſe vaſt empires of Tartary, and China, and Japan, and Indoſtan, and other great kingdoms of the eaſt, but in the large and dark regions of the new diſcover'd world; for that ſolemn promiſe which GOD made to his SON, Pſal. ii. 8. "Aſk of me, and I will "give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and "the utmoſt parts of the earth for thy poſſeſſion," ſeems to be very far from being yet fully accompliſh'd; and ſince this is like to be the work of ſome ages, the time perhaps is not far off, when it ſhall begin: and though I ſee no ſufficient grounds from ſcripture to believe the perſonal reign of CHRIST upon earth for a thouſand years; yet it ſeems to be not improbable, that ſome time before the end of the world, the glorious kingdom of CHRIST, I mean

SERM. CXCIII. the prevalency of the pure chriſtian religion, ſhould be of as long continuance, as the reign of Mahomet and antichriſt have been, both which have now laſted about a thouſand years.

For it is clear, that "the fulneſs of the Gentiles" is not yet "come in," becauſe the Jews ſtill continue diſpers'd over the world, which is the mark our SAVIOUR hath given of the call and reſtitution of the Jews, Luke xxi. 24. "They ſhall fall by "the edge of the ſword, and ſhall be led away cap- "tive into all nations; and Jeruſalem ſhall be troden "down of the Gentiles, until the time of the Gen- "tiles be fulfilled:" and thus St. Paul explains to us this prediction of our SAVIOUR, Rom. xi. 25. "I would not, brethren, that you ſhould be igno- "rant of this myſtery, that blindneſs in part is "happened unto Iſrael, until the fulneſs of the Gen- "tiles be come in."

So that this we have reaſon to expect, and this let us pray for, "that the knowledge of the "LORD may fill the earth, as the waters cover the "ſea; that his ways may be known upon earth "and his ſaving health among all nations;" and with St. Paul, "let our hearty deſire and prayer for "Iſrael be, that they may be ſaved; that there may "come out of Sion a deliverer, and he may turn "away unrighteouſneſs from Jacob;" eſpecially ſince St. Paul hath given us reaſon to hope, that this would be of ſo great benefit and advantage to the gentile world, Rom. xi. 12. "If the fall of the Jews "be the riches of the world, and the diminution of "them, the riches of the Gentiles; how much more "their fulneſs?" and ver. 15. "for if the caſting "away of them be the reconciling of the world

"wha

" what ſhall the receiving of them be, but life " from the dead?" intimating, that as the rejection of the Jews was the occaſion of publiſhing the goſpel, that " doctrine of reconciliation," to the world, as the ſame apoſtle doth elſewhere call it; ſo the receiving them to favour again, ſhould be " life " from the dead," that is, a kind of reſurrection to the remainder of the gentile world, who had ſo long " lain in darkneſs, and the ſhadow of death." Which " the GOD of peace, who brought again " from the dead our LORD JESUS CHRIST, " the great ſhepherd of the ſheep, through the " blood of the everlaſting covenant," grant in his due time may be accompliſhed; that thoſe " other " ſheep which are not yet of this fold, may hear his " voice, and be brought in, that there may be one " fold, and one ſhepherd; and all the ends of the " earth may ſee the ſalvation of our GOD."

# SERMON CXCIV.

## The poſſibility of the reſurrection aſſerted and proved.

ACTS xxvi. 8.

*Why ſhould it be thought a thing incredible with you, that* GOD *ſhould raiſe the dead?*

THE reſurrection of the dead is one of the great articles of the chriſtian faith; and yet ſo it hath happened, that this great article of our religion

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religion hath been made one of the chief objections againſt it. There is nothing that chriſtianity hath been more upbraided withal, both by the heathens of old, and by the infidels of later times, than the impoſſibility of this article. So that it is a matter of great conſideration and conſequence, to vindicate our religion in this particular. For if the thing be evidently impoſſible, then it is highly unreaſonable to propoſe it to the belief of mankind.

I know that ſome more devout than wiſe, and who, it is to be hoped, mean better than they underſtand, make nothing of impoſſibilities in matters of faith, and would fain perſuade us, that the more impoſſible any thing is, for that very reaſon it is the fitter to be believed; and that it is an argument of a poor and low faith, to believe only things that are poſſible; but a generous and heroical faith will ſwallow contradictions, with as much eaſe as reaſon aſſents to the plaineſt and moſt evident propoſitions. Tertullian, in the heat of his zeal and eloquence, upon this point of the death and reſurrection of CHRIST, lets fall a very odd paſſage, and which muſt have many grains of allowance to make it tolerable: *prorſus credibile eſt*", (ſaith he) *quia ineptum eſt*; *certum eſt quia impoſſibile*: "it is therefore very "credible, becauſe it is fooliſh; and certain, becauſe "it is impoſſible:" and this (ſays he) is *neceſſarium dedecas fidei*, that is, "it is neceſſary the chriſtian faith "ſhould be thus diſgraced, by the belief of impoſſi-"bilities and contradictions." I ſuppoſe he means, that this article of the reſurrection was not in itſelf the leſs credible, becauſe the heathen philoſophers cavilled at it, as a thing impoſſible and contradictious, and endeavoured to diſgrace the chriſtian religion upon

upon that account. For had he meant otherwiſe, SERM. CXCIV.
that the thing was therefore credible, becauſe it was really and in itſelf fooliſh and impoſſible: this had been to recommend the chriſtian religion, from the abſurdity of the things to be believed; which would be a ſtrange commendation of any religion to the ſober and reaſonable part of mankind.

I know not what ſome men may find in themſelves; but I muſt freely acknowledge, that I could never yet attain to that bold and hardy degree of faith, as to believe any thing for this reaſon, becauſe it was impoſſible: for this would be to believe a thing to be, becauſe I am ſure it cannot be. So that I am very far from being of his mind, that wanted not only more difficulties, but even impoſſibilities in the chriſtian religion, to exerciſe his faith upon.

'Tis true indeed, Abraham, when he was offering up his ſon Iſaac, is ſaid, "againſt hope to have believed in hope:" but he did not believe againſt a plain impoſſibility; for the apoſtle to the Hebrews expreſly tells us, that "he reaſoned that GOD was "able to raiſe him from the dead." But had he believed this impoſſible, he could not have reconciled the command of GOD, with his promiſe; the command "to ſacrifice Iſaac," with the promiſe which he had made before, that "in his ſeed (which was "Iſaac) all the nations of the earth ſhould be bleſſed." So that though GOD was pleaſed to try his faith with a great difficulty, yet with no impoſſibility.

I premiſe all this, to ſatisfy men how neceſſary it is to vindicate the chriſtian religion from this objection, of the impoſſibility of any of its articles. And whatever Tertullian might ſay in a rhetorical rant, it is very plain that the ancient fathers did not think the reſurrection

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reſurrection to be a thing impoſſible; for then would never have attempted, as they very frequ do, to have anſwered the objections of the hea againſt it, from the pretended impoſſibility of i

To be ſure St. Paul did not think the reſurre of the dead a thing impoſſible, for then he w never have aſked that queſtion, "why ſhould "thought a thing incredible with you, that "ſhould raiſe the dead?" nothing being ſo l to be thought incredible, and upon ſo good re as that which is impoſſible.

Leaving therefore to the church of Rome that hardineſs of faith, to believe things to be true, w at the ſame time their reaſon plainly tells then impoſſible, I ſhall at this time endeavour to and vindicate this article of the reſurrection, the pretended impoſſibility of it. And I hop GOD's aſſiſtance, to make the poſſibility of the ſo plain, as to leave no conſiderable ſcruple abo in any free and unprejudiced mind. And this I do from theſe words of St. Paul, which are pa the defence which he made for himſelf before F and Agrippa; the ſubſtance whereof is this, th had lived a blameleſs and inoffenſive life amon Jews, in whoſe religion he had been bred up; he was of the ſtricteſt ſect of that religion, a P ſee, which in oppoſition to the Sadducees, maint the reſurrection of the dead, and a future ſta rewards and puniſhments in another life; and

" night, hope to come; for which hope ſake, king " Agrippa, I am accuſed of the Jews." That is, he was accuſed for preaching that JESUS was riſen from the dead, which is a particular inſtance of the general doctrine of the reſurrection, which was entertained by the greateſt part of the Jews, and which to the natural reaſon of mankind, (however the heathen in oppoſition to the chriſtian religion were prejudiced againſt it) hath nothing in it that is incredible. And for this he appeals to his judges, Feſtus and Agrippa, " why ſhould it be thought a " thing incredible with you, that GOD ſhould raiſe " the dead?" SERM. CXCIV.

Which words being a queſtion without an anſwer, imply in them theſe two propoſitions.

Firſt, that it was thought by ſome a thing incredible, that the dead ſhould be raiſed. This is ſuppoſed in the queſtion, as the foundation of it: for he who aſks why a thing is ſo, ſuppoſeth it to be ſo.

Secondly, that this apprehenſion, that it is a thing incredible, that GOD ſhould raiſe the dead, is very unreaſonable. For the queſtion being left unanſwered, implies its own anſwer, and is to be reſolved into this affirmative, that there is no reaſon why they or any man elſe ſhould think it a thing incredible that GOD ſhould raiſe the dead.

I ſhall ſpeak to theſe two propoſitions, as briefly as I can; and then ſhew, what influence this doctrine of the reſurrection ought to have upon our lives.

Firſt, that it was thought by ſome a thing incredible, that GOD ſhould raiſe the dead. This St. Paul had reaſon to ſuppoſe, having from his own experience found men ſo averſe from the entertaining of this doctrine. When he preached to the philoſophers

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phers at Athens, and declared to them the reſurrection of one JESUS from the dead, they were amazed at this new doctrine, and know not what he meant by it, Acts x. vii. 18. "They ſaid, he ſeemeth to "be a ſetter forth of ſtrange gods, becauſe he preached unto them JESUS and the reſurrection." He had diſcourſed to them of the reſurrection of one JESUS from the dead; but this buſineſs of the reſurrection, was a thing ſo remote from their apprehenſions, that they had no manner of conception of it; but underſtood him quite in another ſenſe, as if he had declared to them two new deities, JESUS and Anaſtaſis; as if he had brought a new god and a new goddeſs among them, "JESUS and the re-"ſurrection." And when he diſcourſed to them again more fully of this matter, it is ſaid, ver. 32. that "when they heard of the reſurrection of the "dead, they mocked." And at the 24th verſe of this 26th chapter, when he ſpake of the reſurrection, Feſtus told him, he would hear him no farther, and that he looked upon him as a man "beſide him-"ſelf, whom much learning had made mad." Feſtus looked upon this buſineſs of the reſurrection, as the wild ſpeculation of a crazy head. And indeed the heathens generally, even thoſe who believed the immortality of the ſoul, and another ſtate after this life, looked upon the reſurrection of the body as a thing impoſſible. Pliny, I remember, reckons it among thoſe things which are impoſſible, and which GOD himſelf cannot do; *revocare defunctos*, "to "call back the dead to life;" and in the primitive times, the heathen philoſophers very much derided the chriſtians, upon account of this ſtrange doctrine of the reſurrection, looking always upon this

this article of their faith, as a ridiculous and impoſſi- SERM.
ble aſſertion. CXCIV.

So eaſy is it for prejudice to blind the minds of men, and to repreſent every thing to them, which hath a great appearance of difficulty in it, as impoſſible. But I ſhall endeavour to ſhew, that if the matter be thoroughly examined, there is no ground for any ſuch apprehenſion. I proceed therefore to the

Second propoſition, namely, that this apprehenſion, that it is an incredible thing that GOD ſhould raiſe the dead, is very unreaſonable: "why ſhould 'it be thought a thing incredible with you, that 'GOD ſhould raiſe the dead?" That is, there is no ſufficient reaſon, why any man ſhould look upon the reſurrection of the dead, as a thing impoſſible to the power of GOD; the only reaſon why they thought it incredible, being becauſe they judged it impoſſible: ſo that nothing can be vainer, than for men to pretend to believe the reſurrection; and yet at the ſame time to grant it to be a thing in reaſon impoſſible, becauſe no man can believe that which he thinks to be incredible; and the impoſſibility of a thing is the beſt reaſon any man can have to think or think incredible, So that the meaning of St. Paul's queſtion is, "why ſhould it be thought a thing impoſſible, that GOD ſhould raiſe the dead?"

To come then to the buſineſs: I ſhall endeavour to ſhew, that there is no ſufficient reaſon, why men ſhould look upon the reſurrection of the dead, as a thing impoſſible to GOD. "Why ſhould it be thought a thing incredible (that is impoſſible) with you, that GOD ſhould raiſe the dead?" which queſtion implies in it theſe three things:

I. That

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I. That it is above the power of nature, to raiſe the dead.

II. But it is not above the power of GOD, to raiſe the dead. And,

III. That GOD ſhould be able to do this, is by no means incredible to natural reaſon.

I. This queſtion implies, that it is above the power of nature, to raiſe the dead; and therefore the apoſtle puts the queſtion very cautiouſly, "why ſhould "it be thought incredible, that GOD ſhould raiſe "the dead?" by which he ſeems to grant, that it is impoſſible to any natural power, to raiſe the dead; which is granted on all hands.

II. But this queſtion does plainly imply, that it is not above the power of GOD, to do this. Though the raiſing of the dead to life, be a thing above the power of nature, yet why ſhould it be thought incredible that GOD, who is the author of nature, ſhould be able to do this? and indeed the apoſtle's putting the queſtion in this manner, takes away the main ground of this objection againſt the reſurrection, from the impoſſibility of the thing. For the main reaſon, why it was looked upon as impoſſible, was, becauſe it was contrary to the courſe of nature, that there ſhould be any return from a perfect privation to a habit, and that a body perfectly dead ſhould be reſtored to life again: but for all this, no man that believes a GOD, who made the world, and this natural frame of things, but muſt think it very reaſonable to believe, that he can do things far above the power of any thing that he hath made.

III. This queſtion implies that it is not a thing incredible to natural reaſon, that GOD ſhould be able to raiſe the dead. I do not ſay, that by natural light

light we can diſcover that GOD will raiſe the dead; for that depending merely upon the will of GOD, can no otherwiſe be certainly known than by divine revelation: but that GOD can do this, is not at all incredible to natural reaſon. And this is ſufficiently implied in the queſtion which St. Paul aſks, in which he appeals to Feſtus and Agrippa, neither of them chriſtians, "why ſhould it be thought a thing incredible with you, that GOD ſhould raiſe the dead?" And why ſhould he appeal to them concerning the credibility of this matter, if it be a thing incredible to natural reaſon? SERM. CXCIV.

That it is not, I ſhall firſt endeavour to prove, and then to anſwer the chief objections againſt the poſſibility of it.

And I prove it thus: it is not incredible to natural reaſon, that GOD made the world, and all the creatures in it; that mankind is "his offſpring;" and that "he gives us life and breath, and all things." This was acknowledged and firmly believed by many of the heathens. And indeed, whoever believes that the being of GOD may be known by natural light, muſt grant, that it may be known by the natural light of reaſon, that GOD made the world; becauſe one of the chief arguments for the being of GOD, is taken from thoſe viſible effects of wiſdom, and power, and goodneſs, which we ſee in the frame of the world. Now he that can do the greater, can undoubtedly do the leſs; he that made all things of nothing, can much more raiſe a body out of the duſt; he who at firſt gave life to ſo many inanimate beings, can eaſily reſtore that which is dead to life again. It is an excellent ſaying of one of the Jewiſh rabbies: "that he who made that which was not,

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" to be, can certainly make that which once was, to " be again." This hath the force of a demonſtration; for no man that believes that GOD hath done the one, can make any doubt, but that he can if he pleaſe do the other.

This ſeems to be ſo very clear, that they muſt be ſtrong objections indeed, that can render it incredible.

There are but two that I know of, that are of any conſideration, and I ſhall not be afraid to repreſent them to you with their utmoſt advantage; and they are theſe:

Firſt, againſt the reſurrection in general: it is pretended impoſſible, after the bodies of men are reſolved into duſt, to recollect all the diſperſed parts, and bring them together, to be united into one body.

The ſecond is levell'd againſt the reſurrection in ſome particular inſtances, and pretends it to be impoſſible in ſome caſes only, viz. when that which was the matter of one man's body, does afterwards become the matter of another man's body; in which caſe, ſay they, it is impoſſible that both theſe ſhould, at the reſurrection, each have their own body.

The difficulty of both theſe objections, is perfectly avoided by thoſe who hold, that it is not neceſſary that our bodies at the reſurrection ſhould conſiſt of the very ſame parts of matter that they did before; there being no ſuch great difference between one parcel of duſt and another; neither in reſpect of the power of GOD, which can as eaſily command " this" parcel of duſt, as " that" to become a living body, and being united to a living ſoul to riſe up and walk: ſo that the miracle

of the reſurrection will be all one in the main, whether our bodies be made of the very ſame matter they were before, or not. Nor will there be any difference as to us; for whatever matter our bodies be made of, when they are once re-united to our ſouls, they will be then as much our own, as if they had been made of the very ſame matter of which they conſiſted before. Beſides that, the change which the reſurrection will make in our bodies, will be ſo great, that we could not know them to be the ſame, though they were ſo. SERM. CXCIV.

Now upon this ſuppoſition, which ſeems philoſophical enough, the force of both theſe objections is wholly declined. But there is no need to fly to this refuge; and therefore I will take this article of the reſurrection in the ſtricteſt ſenſe for the raiſing of a body to life, conſiſting of the ſame individual matter that it did before; and in this ſenſe, I think it hath generally been received by chriſtians, not without ground from ſcripture. I will only mention one text, which ſeems very ſtrongly to imply it, Rev. xx. 13. "And the ſea gave up the dead which were "in it; and death and the grave delivered up the "dead which were in them; and they were judged "every man according to his works." Now why ſhould the "ſea" and "the grave" be ſaid "to "deliver up their dead," if there were not a reſurrection of the ſame body; but any duſt formed into a living body, and united to the ſoul, would ſerve the turn? we will therefore take it for granted, that the very ſame body ſhall be raiſed, and I doubt not even in this ſenſe, to vindicate the poſſibility of the reſurrection from both theſe objections.

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Firſt, againſt the reſurrection in general of the ſame body; it is pretended impoſſible, after the bodies of men are moulder'd into the duſt, and by infinite accidents have been ſcatter'd up and down the world, and have undergone a thouſand changes, to recollect and rally together the very ſame parts of which they conſiſted before. This the heathens uſed to object to the primitive chriſtians; for which reaſon they alſo uſed to burn the bodies of martyrs, and to ſcatter their aſhes in the air, to be blown about by the wind, in deriſion of their hopes of a reſurrection.

I know not how ſtrong malice might make this objection to appear; but ſurely in reaſon it is very weak: for it wholly depends upon a groſs miſtake of the nature of GOD and his providence, as if it did not extend to the ſmalleſt things; as if GOD did not know all things that he hath made, and had them not always in his view, and perfectly under his command; and as if it were a trouble and burden to infinite knowledge and power, to underſtand and order the leaſt things: whereas infinite knowledge and power can know and manage all things, with as much eaſe, as we can underſtand and order any one thing.

So that this objection is grounded upon a low and falſe apprehenſion of the divine nature, and is only fit for Epicurus his herd, who fancied to themſelves a ſort of ſlothful and unthinking deities whoſe happineſs conſiſted in their lazineſs, and a privilege to do nothing. I proceed therefore to the

Second objection, which is more cloſe and preſſing; and this is levell'd againſt the reſurrection in ſome particular inſtances. I will mention but

" two,

" two," by which all the reſt may be meaſur'd and anſwered. SERM. CXCIV.

One is, of thoſe who are drowned in the ſea, and their bodies eaten up by fiſhes, and turned into their nouriſhment; and thoſe fiſhes perhaps eaten afterwards by men, and converted into the ſubſtance of their bodies.

The other is of the Canibals; ſome of whom, as credible relations tell us, have lived wholly, or chiefly of the fleſh of men; and conſequently the whole, or the greateſt part of the ſubſtance of their bodies is made of the bodies of other men. In theſe and the like caſes, wherein one man's body is ſuppoſed to be turned into the ſubſtance of another man's body, how ſhould both theſe at the reſurrection, each recover his own body? So that this objection is like that of the Sadducees to our SAVIOUR, concerning a woman that had ſeven huſbands, they aſk " whoſe " wife of the ſeven ſhall ſhe be at the reſurrection?" So here, when ſeveral have had the ſame body, whoſe ſhall it be at the reſurrection? and how ſhall they be ſupplied that have it not?

This is the objection; and in order to the anſwering of it, I ſhall premiſe theſe two things:

I. That the body of man is not a conſtant and permanent thing, always continuing in the ſame ſtate, and conſiſting of the ſame matter: but a ſucceſſive thing, which is continually ſpending, and continually renewing itſelf, every day loſing ſomething of the matter which it had before, and gaining new; ſo hat moſt men have new bodies, oftner than they ıave new clothes; only with this difference, that we hange our clothes commonly at once, but our bodies ›y degrees.

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And this is undeniably certain from experience. For ſo much as our bodies grow, ſo much new matter is added to them, over and beſides the repairing of what is continually ſpent; and after a man be come to his full growth, ſo much of his food, as every day turns into nouriſhment, ſo much of his yeſterday's body is uſually waſted, and carried off by inſenſible perſpiration, that is, breathed out at the pores of his body; which according to the ſtatick experiment of Sanctorius a learned phyſician, who for ſeveral years together weighed himſelf exactly every day, is (as I remember) according to the proportion of five to eight, of all that a man eats and drinks. Now according to this proportion, every man muſt change his body ſeveral times in a year.

'Tis true indeed, the more ſolid parts of the body, as the bones, do not change ſo often as the fluid and fleſhy; but that they alſo do change, is certain, becauſe they grew, and whatever grows is nouriſh'd and ſpends, becauſe otherwiſe it would not need to be repair'd.

II. The body which a man hath at any time of his life, is as much his own body, as that which he hath at his death; ſo that if the very matter of his body, which a man had any time of his life, be raiſed, it is as much his own and the ſame body, as that which he had at his death, and commonly much more perfect; becauſe they who die of lingering ſickneſs, or old age, are uſually mere ſkeletons when they die; ſo that there is no reaſon to ſuppoſe, that the very matter of which our bodies conſiſt at the time of our death, ſhall be that which ſhall be raiſed; that being commonly the worſt, and moſt imperfect body of all the reſt.

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Theſe two things being premiſed, the anſwer to this objection cannot be difficult. For as to the more ſolid and firm parts of the body, as the ſkull and bones, 'tis not I think pretended that the Canibals eat them; and if they did, ſo much of the matter, even of theſe ſolid parts, waſtes away in a few years, as being collected together would ſupply them many times over. And as for the fleſhy and fluid parts, theſe are ſo very often changed and renewed, that we can allow the Canibals to eat them all up, and to turn them all into nouriſhment, and yet no man need contend for want of a body of his own at the reſurrection, viz. any of thoſe bodies which he had ten or twenty years before; which are every whit as good, and as much his own, as that which was eaten.

You will pardon me, I hope, that I have dwelt ſo long upon ſo contentious an argument, when you conſider how neceſſary what I have ſaid is to the vindicating of ſo great an article of our religion; and eſpecially in this evil age of unbelief, when greater matters than this are called in queſtion.

Having thus ſhewn that the reſurrection is not a thing incredible to natural reaſon, I ſhould now proceed to ſhew the certainty of it from divine revelation. For as reaſon tells us, it is not impoſſible; ſo the word of GOD hath aſſur'd us, that it is certain. The texts of ſcripture are ſo many and clear to this purpoſe, and ſo well known to all chriſtians, that I will produce none. I ſhall only tell you, that as it is expreſly revealed in the goſpel, ſo our bleſſed SAVIOUR, for the confirmation of our faith, and the comfort and encouragement of our hope, hath given us the experiment of it in his own reſurrection,

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which is "the earneſt and firſt-fruits of ours." So St. Paul tells us, that "CHRIST is riſen from the "dead, and become the firſt-fruits of them that "ſlept." And that CHRIST did really riſe from the dead, we have as good evidence, as for any ancient matter of fact which we do moſt firmly believe; and more and greater evidence than this, the thing is not capable of; and becauſe it is not, no reaſonable man ought to require it.

Now what remains, but to conclude this diſcourſe with thoſe practical inferences which our apoſtle makes from this doctrine of the reſurrection; and I ſhall mention theſe two:

The firſt for our ſupport and comfort under the infirmities and miſeries of this mortal life.

The ſecond for the encouragement of obedience and a good life.

I. For our comfort and ſupport under the infirmities and miſeries of this mortal ſtate. The conſideration of the glorious change of our bodies at the reſurrection of the juſt, cannot but be a great comfort to us, under all bodily pain and ſufferings.

One of the greateſt burdens of humane nature, is the frailty and infirmity of our bodies, the neceſſities they are frequently preſs'd withal, the manifold diſeaſes they are liable to, and the dangers and terrors of death, to which they are continually ſubject and enſlav'd. But the time is coming, if we be careful to prepare ourſelves for it, when we ſhall be clothed with other kind of bodies, free from all theſe miſeries and inconveniencies which fleſh and blood is ſubject to. For "theſe vile bodies ſhall be changed, and "faſhioned like to the glorious body of the SON of "GOD." When our bodies ſhall be raiſed to a new

w life, they ſhall become incorruptible; "for this SERM.
corruptible muſt put on incorruption, and this CXCIV.
mortal muſt put on immortality; and then ſhall
come to paſs the ſaying that is written, death is
ſwallowed up in victory." When this laſt enemy
conquered, there ſhall be no "fleſhly luſts," nor
utiſh paſſions, "to fight againſt the ſoul; no law
in our members, to war againſt the law of our
minds;" no diſeaſe to torment us, no danger of
ath to amaze and terrify us. Then all the paſſions
d appetites of our outward man ſhall be ſubject to
e reaſon of our minds, and our bodies ſhall par-
te of the immortality of our ſouls. It is but a
ry little while, that our ſpirits ſhall be cruſhed, and
gged with theſe heavy and ſluggiſh bodies: at the
urrection they ſhall be refined from all dregs of
rruption, and become ſpiritual, and incorruptible,
d glorious, and every way ſuited to the activity and
rfection of a glorified ſoul, and "the ſpirits of
juſt men made perfect."

II. For the encouragement of obedience and a
od life. Let the belief of this great article of our
ith have the ſame influence upon us, which St.
ul tells us it had upon him, Acts xxiv. 15, 16.
I have hope towards GOD, that there ſhall be
a reſurrection of the dead, both of the juſt and
unjuſt; and herein do I exerciſe myſelf, always to
have a conſcience void of offence, towards GOD
and towards men." The firm belief of a reſurrec-
n to another life ſhould make every one of us very
reful how we demean ourſelves in this life, and afraid
do any thing, or to neglect any thing, that may
feat our hopes of a bleſſed immortality, and expoſe

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us to the extreme and endleſs miſery of body and ſoul in another life.

Particularly, it ſhould be an argument to us, "to "glorify GOD in our bodies, and in our ſpirits;" and to uſe the members of the one, and the faculties of the other, as "inſtruments of righteouſneſs, "unto holineſs." We ſhould reverence ourſelves, and take heed, not only how we defile our ſouls by ſinful paſſions, but how we diſhonour our bodies by ſenſual and brutiſh luſts; ſince GOD hath deſigned ſo great an honour and happineſs for both at the reſurrection.

So often as we think of a bleſſed reſurrection to eternal life, and the happy conſequences of it; the thoughts of ſo glorious a reward ſhould make us diligent and unwearied in the ſervice of ſo good a maſter, and ſo great a prince, who can and will prefer us to infinitely greater honours, than any that are to be had in this world. This inference the apoſtle makes from the doctrine of the reſurrection, 1 Cor. xv. 58. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye "ſtedfaſt and unmoveable, always abounding in the "work of the LORD; foraſmuch as ye know that "your labour ſhall not be in vain in the LORD."

Nay we may begin this bleſſed ſtate while we are upon earth, by "ſettling our hearts and affections "upon the things that are above, and having our "converſations in heaven, from whence alſo we look "for a SAVIOUR, the LORD JESUS CHRIST; "who ſhall change our vile bodies, that they may "be faſhioned like unto his glorious body, accord-"ing to the working whereby he is able to ſubdue "all things to himſelf."

"Now

" Now the GOD of peace, who brought again " from the dead our LORD JESUS CHRIST, " the great ſhepherd of the ſheep, through the blood " of the everlaſting covenant, make us perfect in " every good work to do his will, working in us " always that which is pleaſing in his ſight, through " JESUS CHRIST; to whom be glory for ever." Amen.

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# SERMON CXCV.

## The reſurrection of our SAVIOUR conſidered, as an argument for ſeeking things above.

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COL. iii. 1, 2.

*If ye then be riſen with* CHRIST, *ſeek thoſe things which are above, where* CHRIST *ſitteth at the right hand of* GOD. *Set your affections on things above; not on things on the earth.*

THE apoſtle in this epiſtle (as his manner is in all the reſt) having laid the doctrine of the goſpel for a foundation, and endeavoured to rectify ſome errors, both in doctrine and practice, which the chriſtians at Coloſs were ſeduced into, by the guile and arts of falſe teachers and apoſtles, as particularly " the worſhip of angels," and out of a pretence of " humility," addreſſing themſelves to GOD by their mediation, which is the particular SERM. CXCV.

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ticular ſcope and deſign of this epiſtle: the apoſtle, I ſay, having in the former part of it, endeavoured to ſet them right in this matter, and to eſtabliſh their minds, in the faith and doctrine of CHRIST; in the latter part of it, exhorts them to a converſation anſwerable to the doctrine of CHRIST, to a holy and heavenly life; at the beginning of this third chapter: "if ye then be riſen "with CHRIST, ſeek the things which are above, "where CHRIST ſitteth at the right hand of "GOD. Set your affections on things above; not "on things on the earth,"

This inference is drawn from what he had ſaid at a good diſtance before, namely, at the 12th verſe of the former chapter, "being buried with "him in baptiſm, wherein alſo ye are riſen with "him, through the faith of the operation of GOD, "who hath raiſed him from the dead." "Being "buried with him in baptiſm." For the full underſtanding of this expreſſion, we muſt have recourſe to that parallel text, Rom. vi. 3, 4, 5. which will explain to us the meaning of this phraſe. "Know ye not, that ſo many of us as were bap"tized into JESUS CHRIST, were baptized into "his death? therefore we are buried with him by "baptiſm into death, that like as CHRIST was "raiſed up from the dead by the glory of the "FATHER, even ſo we alſo ſhould walk in new"neſs of life. For if we have been planted toge"ther in the likeneſs of his death, we ſhall be alſo "in the likeneſs of his reſurrection." Where we ſee, that "to be baptized into the death and reſur"rection of CHRIST," is to be baptized into the ſimilitude and likeneſs of them; and the reſemblance

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lance is this; that as CHRIST being dead was uried in the grave, and after ſome ſtay in it, that ;, for three days, he was raiſed again out of it, by he glorious power of GOD, to a new and heavenly ife, being not long after taken up into heaven to live t the right hand of GOD; To chriſtians, when they were baptized, were immerſed into the water three imes, their bodies being covered all over with it; which is therefore called, our being "buried with him "by baptiſm into death;" and after ſome ſhort ſtay under water, were "raiſed" or taken up again out of it, as if they had been "recovered to a new "life;" by all which was ſpiritually ſignified, our dying to ſin, and being raiſed to a divine and heavenly life, "through the faith of the operation of "GOD;" that is, by that divine and ſupernatural power, which raiſed up CHRIST from the dead. So that chriſtians from thenceforth were "to reckon "themſelves dead unto ſin, but alive unto GOD, "through JESUS CHRIST," as the apoſtle ſpeaks, Rom. vi. 11.

Now upon this ground, that we are "buried "with CHRIST in baptiſm, and riſen with him "to a new and heavenly life," the apoſtle founds the exhortation in the text, "if ye then be riſen "with CHRIST, ſeek the things which are above, "where CHRIST ſitteth at the right hand of "GOD. Set your affections on things above; not "on things on the earth." So that the words are n earneſt exhortation to a divine life, and a ſpiriual and heavenly converſation. In which there are wo things to be conſidered:

Firſt, the duty we are exhorted to, which is heaenly-mindedneſs. "Seek the things which are "above,"

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are ſuch treaſures in heaven, ſo great a reward laid up for good men, "joys ſo unſpeakable and full of "glory," and when our underſtandings have dwelt ſo long upon theſe things, as to work upon our affections, theſe, like ſo many ſprings of motion, will ſet our endeavours on work, for the obtaining of what we ſo much love and deſire, and will make us inquiſitive, with the young man in the goſpel, "what good thing we ſhall do, that we may inhe- "rit eternal life;" by what means we may beſt ſecure our title to heaven and happineſs; and very induſtrious to acquire thoſe qualities and diſpoſitions, which will fit us for heaven, and the bleſſed ſight and enjoyment of GOD; nay, by which we may begin this happy ſtate here, by our converſation in heaven, whilſt we are ſojourning here below, as "pilgrims and ſtrangers in the earth."

4. It implies a clear preference of the things above, to the things of the earth, when they come in competition. And in this ſenſe the word φρονεῖν is obſerved to be uſed in good authors, for taking part with, and adhering to one ſide, when two parties or intereſts come in competition. And indeed this phraſe and form of ſpeech, when the thing is expreſſed affirmatively and negatively, is very often uſed by way of compariſon, when two things come in competition. "Lay not up for yourſelves "treaſures upon earth: but lay up for yourſelves "treaſures in heaven. Labour not for the meat that "periſheth; but for that which endureth to eter- "nal life." So here: "ſet your affections on "things above, not on things on the earth." When heaven and earth come in competition, the happineſs of the next life, and the enjoyments of this,

is, the intereſt of your ſouls, and of your bodies, SERM. CXCV.
the things which are not ſeen, and are eternal," and "the things which are ſeen, and are but temporal," a holy, and heavenly, and virtuous life, and a ſenſual and ſinful courſe, "chooſe the better part," ſtick to that which is the true and laſting intereſt; prefer heaven before earth, and the care of your ſouls, to that of your bodies, things eternal, to things temporal, and a holy and virtuous life which leads to heaven, to thoſe ſinful and vicious practices, which will ſink men into perdition. For that this alſo the apoſtle means by "things on the earth," ſinful luſts and practices, ſeems very probable, from what follows, at ver. 5. "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth."

II. Let us conſider the object of this act, what it is that we are to ſeek and ſet our affections upon; and that is "the things which are above."

1. The glorious GOD and FATHER of all, and his bleſſed and eternal SON our LORD JESUS CHRIST, and the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD; theſe are the great objects of our contemplation and adoration. And then the holy angels, and "the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect," who are examples to us, of doing the will of GOD here on earth, as it is done by them in heaven.

2. The bleſſed ſtate and condition which we aſpire after in the next life, with all the joys and glories of it, "ſuch as eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, neither have entred into the heart of man."

3. The diſpoſitions to be acquired, and the actions and duties to be performed by us, as neceſſary qualifications and means for the obtaining of this happineſs, and bringing us to the poſſeſſion of it; all theſe

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are comprehended in the latitude of the object, "the "things which are above."

And "to ſeek," and "mind," and "ſet our "affections" upon theſe, is to do thoſe things, which the conſideration of each of theſe reſpectively calls for; ſo to meditate on GOD, and mind him, as to fear, and love, and ſerve him; to ſeek his glory as our laſt end, and the enjoyment of him as our chief good; to ſeek his favour above all things, and to ſue to him, as the fountain of all grace, and "the giver of every good and perfect "gift," and of all bleſſings temporal, ſpiritual, and eternal, by the powerful interceſſion of his SON, the great and only mediator between GOD and man, to be obtain'd for us, and to be wrought in us, by the powerful virtue and operation of the HOLY SPIRIT. So to mind the angels and bleſſed ſaints above, as to aſpire after their ſociety, by imitating their virtues, and "being followers of thoſe, who "through faith and patience have inherited the pro-"miſes." So to meditate on our future bleſſedneſs, as to raiſe our hearts and affections above this world, and effectually to engage us to fit ourſelves for that bleſſed ſtate and condition, that we may be "meet "to be made partakers of that glorious inheritance." And laſtly, ſo to mind all the duties and means neceſſary and conducing to our ſalvation, as effectually to perform them; to order our lives and all the actions of them, with a regard to eternity; in a word, to omit and neglect nothing that may further and promote the great deſign of our eternal ſalvation, and to do nothing that may contradict or hinder it. This is "to ſeek and ſet our affections upon the "things that are above." And thus I have done with

with the firſt thing I propounded, the nature of the duty which we are exhorted to. I proceed to the

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Second thing I propounded, which was to conſider the force of the arguments, which are uſed to perſuade us to it. Here are three arguments in the text to this purpoſe; two of them are expreſs, and the third of them implied.

I. "If ye be riſen with CHRIST, ſeek the things "which are above."

II. "Seek the things which are above, where "CHRIST ſitteth at the right hand of GOD."

III. The tranſcendent and incomparable excellency of the things above, in compariſon of earthly things. This is intimated in the oppoſition, "ſet your affec-"tions on the things which are above; and not "on things on the earth." I ſhall briefly ſhew the force of each of theſe arguments.

I. "If ye then be riſen with CHRIST, ſeek the "things which are above." That is, if ye believe his reſurrection, if ye will be conformed to him in it, if ye be made partakers of the power and virtue of it.

1. If ye believe the reſurrection of CHRIST. The reſurrection of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, was the great ſeal of his miniſtry, and confirmation of his doctrine; and one great branch of his doctrine was heavenly-mindedneſs, that we ſhould "lay up for "ourſelves treaſures in heaven," becauſe "where "our treaſure is, there will our hearts be alſo;" that we ſhould "firſt ſeek the kingdom of GOD, "and the righteouſneſs thereof."

2. If we will bear a conformity and reſemblance to him in his reſurrection. He is our great pattern and example, which the goſpel propounds to us;

SERM. CXCV. and that we may have the nearer conformity to him the apoſtle doth not only propoſe the virtues of h life to our imitation, but where we cannot literal imitate him, the apoſtle urgeth ſpiritual conformit that thoſe things which he did and ſuffered in h body, we ſhould do and ſuffer ſpiritually; as CHRIS "died for ſin," ſo we ſhould "die to ſin;" as h literally "roſe again from the dead," ſo in confo mity to him, we ſhould be ſpiritually "raiſed t "newneſs of life." As he "aſcended into heaven, ſo we ſhould "aſcend thither alſo in our hearts an "affections." Col. ii. 12. "Buried with him i "baptiſm, wherein alſo ye are riſen with him "through the faith of the operation of GOD, wh "hath raiſed him from the dead." Rom. vi. 4, 5 "Therefore we are buried with him by baptiſm int "death, that like as CHRIST was raiſed from th "dead by the glory of the FATHER, even ſo w "alſo ſhould walk in newneſs of life. For if w "have been planted together in the likeneſs of hi "death, we ſhall be alſo in the likeneſs of his reſur "rection." To be raiſed from the dead, is in orde to a new life. So the apoſtle tells us, ver. 9, 10 11. "Knowing that CHRIST being raiſed from "the dead, dieth no more, death hath no more do "minion over him. For in that he died, he die "unto ſin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unt "GOD. Likewiſe reckon ye alſo yourſelves to b "dead indeed unto ſin: but alive unto GOD, through "JESUS CHRIST our LORD." As the reſur rection of CHRIST was in order to a better an happier life, to his aſcenſion into heaven, and hi living with GOD: ſo in conformity to CHRIST our ſpiritual reſurrection ſhould be in order to a hea-

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venly and divine life. And what is the meaning of all this? but that men are apt to imitate thoſe whom they love, and do affect to reſemble them as much as they can. And therefore to endear our duty to us, the mortification of our luſts, and a holy life, the apoſtle tells us, that hereby we bear a conformity to CHRIST, the great object of our love and imitation. SERM. CXCV.

3. If ye be made partakers of the power and virtue of his reſurrection. The reſurrection of CHRIST is not only a pattern, but hath a power and efficacy in it, to raiſe us to a ſpiritual and heavenly life. When CHRIST roſe, he did not riſe alone, but many of the bodies of the ſaints who were dead roſe with him, to ſignify to us the power of his reſurrection. It communicated a virtue to thoſe who had an intereſt in the merits of his death and ſufferings, whereby they are enabled to live a new and heavenly life. John xi. 25. "I am the reſurrection and "the life; he that believeth in me, though he were "dead, yet ſhall he live." Eph. i. 19. "And "what is the exceeding greatneſs of his power to "us-ward, who believe, according to the working "of his mighty power, which he wrought in "CHRIST, when he raiſed him from the dead." Phil. iii. 10, 11. "That I may know him, and the "power of his reſurrection, and the fellowſhip of "his ſufferings, being made conformable unto his "death; if by any means I may attain the reſur-"rection from the dead." Col. ii. 13. "And you "being dead in your ſins, and the uncircumciſion "of your fleſh, hath he quicken'd together with "him," Now this power is derived to us by "be-"lieving on him, who raiſed up JESUS from the

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" dead," that " he is alſo able to raiſe us, who " are dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, to a divine and " heavenly life.". The

IId argument is contained in theſe words, " ſeek " the things which are above, where CHRIST " ſitteth at the right hand of GOD." Which words do declare to us the exaltation of CHRIST's humane nature, and his being advanced to be the king and governor of his church, having all power and judgment committed to him. Luke xxiv. 26. CHRIST's aſcenſion, and his ſitting at the right hand of GOD, is called, " his entring into his glory. Ought he " not to have ſuffer'd theſe things, and then to en- " ter into his glory?" that is, to be inveſted with all power and authority for the good of the church. But moſt particularly the apoſtle deſcribes this, Eph. i. 20, 21, 22. " And ſet him at his own right " hand in heavenly places, far above all principali- " ties, and powers, and might, and dominion, and " every name that is named, not only in this world, " but that which is to come; and hath put all things " under his feet, and given him to be head over all " things to the church."

And now the force of this argument is from the relation that is between the head and the members, between CHRIST and chriſtians. The members have an affection for the head, which makes them aſpire heavenwards; and the head hath an influence upon the members. " If I be lifted up from the " earth," ſays our LORD, " I will draw all men " unto me." This is ſpoken of his crucifixion, " ſig- " nifying what death he ſhould die," as the text tells us, John xii. 32, 33. But it is proportionably true of his aſcenſion, and ſitting at the right hand of GOD;

GOD; for there is a power and virtue in the reſur- SERM.
rection of CHRIST, and his aſcenſion into hea- CXCV.
ven, as well as in his death, to draw all men to him. The gift of GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT is the fruit of his aſcenſion and exaltation "at the right hand of "his majeſty on high:" and 'tis by the powerful operation of the SPIRIT of GOD upon our hearts, that we are raiſed to newneſs of life, and our affections fix'd upon heavenly things. We are naturally bowed down to the earth, and inclined to the things of this world, *curvæ in terris animæ, & cœleſtium inanes:* but our glorified SAVIOUR ſitting at the right hand of GOD, by the power of his SPIRIT, draws our affections to him. The

IIId and laſt argument, which is but implied in the text, is the tranſcendent and incomparable excellency of heavenly things, above things on the earth, which the apoſtle intimates by the oppoſition, "ſet "your affections on things above; not on things on "the earth." Earthly things are periſhing and tranſitory, groſs and unſatisfactory, and cannot be the felicity of an immortal ſoul, being neither ſuited to the ſpiritual nature, nor to the immortal duration of our ſouls; they can neither ſatisfy us while we live, nor preſerve us from death, nor comfort us in it, nor accompany us into the other world, nor contribute any thing to our happineſs there; and if they can do nothing towards our happineſs, why ſhould we ſet our hearts upon them? They that ſeek for happineſs in earthly things, are like the women ſitting over our SAVIOUR'S ſepulchre, with their faces bowed down to the earth; they "ſeek the liv-"ing among the dead;" our happineſs "is not "here, 'tis riſen," 'tis above. Let our hearts aſcend

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thither, where our happineſs and our treaſure is. Why ſhould we beſtow our affections upon theſe low and mean things, when there are incomparably better objects to fix them upon?

The inference from all this ſhall be to engage and perſuade us by all theſe arguments and conſiderations, "to ſeek and mind the things which are "above, where CHRIST ſitteth at the right hand "of GOD; and to have our converſation there, "where our SAVIOUR is, and from whence alſo "we look for him again, to change theſe vile bo-"dies, that they may be made like unto his glorious "body, according to the working of that mighty "power, whereby he is able to ſubdue all things to "himſelf." Let all our actions have relation to another world, and our converſation declare, that we are "mindful of another country, that is a heaven-"ly." Is CHRIST our head riſen and aſcended into heaven? let us in our hearts and affections follow him thither, and patiently wait till he receive our ſouls, and raiſe our bodies, and take us wholly to himſelf, that we may be "for ever with the "LORD."

The reſurrection of CHRIST is a demonſtration of a future ſtate after this life, and a pledge of a bleſſed immortality in another world. For our LORD, by his reſurrection from the dead, hath conquer'd death, and "aboliſh'd it, and brought "life and immortality to light." He is "the firſt-"fruits of them that ſlept," and his reſurrection is an earneſt and aſſurance of ours; and from thence the apoſtle makes this inference, "therefore, my be-"loved brethren, be ye ſtedfaſt and unmoveable, al-"ways abounding in the work of the LORD; for-"aſmuch

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" aſmuch as ye know, that your labour ſhall not be " in vain in the LORD." The belief of a future ſtate after this life, ſhould put us upon the moſt earneſt and vigorous endeavours to ſecure this happy condition to ourſelves; " if by any means," as the apoſtle expreſſeth it, " we may attain the reſurrection " of the dead." It ſhould raiſe us above the world and the luſts of it, above all the terrors and temptations of it.

As on the one hand, the ſerious thoughts of our mortality ſhould check our eager purſuit of this world; ſo on the other hand, the belief of a life to come ſhould quicken our endeavours for the obtaining of it: ſeeing we hope for ſo happy a ſtate, we ſhould prepare ourſelves for it by purity, and holineſs of heart and life, by perſeverance, and a " patient " continuance in well-doing. What manner of per- " ſons ought we to be, in all holy converſation and " godlineſs," who have ſuch hopes and expectations? " Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth " himſelf even as he is pure." Now that " life and " immortality are brought to light by the goſpel," what greater, what other deſign can any man propoſe to himſelf, than to be happy for ever? For ſuch a prize, who would not ſtrive, and run, and take any pains? Who would not deny himſelf, " the " pleaſures of ſin, which are but for a ſeaſon," reſiſt temptations, and conflict with difficulties, and " glory " in tribulations" and ſufferings, and be conſtant and " faithful to the death, in hope of that eternal life, " which GOD that cannot lye hath promiſed?"

In our purſuit of the things of this world, we uſually prevent enjoyment, by expectation; we anticiate our own happineſs, and eat out the heart and ſweetneſs

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ſweetneſs of worldly pleaſures, by delightful fore-thoughts of them; ſo that when we come to poſſeſs them, they do not anſwer the expectation, nor ſatisfy the deſires which were raiſed about them, and they vaniſh into nothing: but the things which are above, are ſo great, ſo ſolid, ſo durable, ſo glorious, that we cannot raiſe our thoughts to an equal height with them; we cannot enlarge our deſires beyond a poſſibility of ſatisfaction. Our hearts are greater than the world; but GOD is greater than our hearts; and the happineſs which he hath laid up for us, is like himſelf, incomprehenſibly great and glorious. Let the thoughts of this raiſe us above this world, and inſpire us with greater thoughts and deſigns, than the care and concernments of this preſent life.

We all profeſs moſt firmly to believe, that after a few days we ſhall leave this world, and all the enjoyments of it, and go to the place from whence we ſhall not return; that we ſhall enter upon an unchangeable ſtate of happineſs or miſery, according as we have demeaned ourſelves in this preſent life; that great care and diligence is neceſſary "to work out "our own ſalvation;" that there muſt be a great preparation of ourſelves, by unſpotted purity of heart and life, to make ourſelves "meet for an inheri-"tance with them that are ſanctified;" that we muſt "labour, and ſtrive, and run, and fight, and give "all diligence to make our calling and election "ſure;" that we had need "to watch and pray al-"ways, that we may be accounted worthy to eſcape "the judgment of the great day, and to ſtand be-"fore the SON of man." Such thoughts as theſe ſhould continually poſſeſs our ſouls, and heaven ſhould be always in our eye, if, with St. Stephen, "we

"ſaw

" ſaw the heavens opened, and JESUS ſtanding at " the right hand of GOD," to ſee how we behave ourſelves here below; and when " we have fought " a good fight, and finiſhed our courſe, and kept " the faith, to receive us to himſelf, that where he " is, there we may be alſo."

" To whom, with the FATHER, and the HOLY " GHOST, be all honour and glory now and for " evermore. Amen."

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# SERMON CXCVI.

## The circumſtances and benefits of our SAVIOUR's aſcenſion.

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ACTS i. 9, 10, 11.

*And when he had ſpoken theſe things, while they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their ſight. And while they looked ſtedfaſtly toward heaven, as he went up, behold, two men ſtood by them in white apparel, which alſo ſaid, ye men of Galilee, why ſtand ye gazing up into heaven? this ſame* JESUS *which is taken up from you into heaven, ſhall ſo come in like manner, as ye have ſeen him go into heaven.*

THERE are two occaſions of this day * accidentally met together, which bear ſome reſemblance to one another; the aſcenſion of our bleſſed SAVIOUR into heaven, and his exaltation in his kingdom, being " crowned with glory " and

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* Preached May 29, being aſcenſion day.

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"jeſty on high:" and the reſtoration of our ſove-
reign to his juſt rights, and royal ſtate and dignity here upon earth, by a miraculous providence of GOD; and as it were by a kind of reſurrection from the dead.

The firſt of theſe being of a more ſpiritual and excellent nature, ſhall be the ſubject of my preſent diſcourſe, not forgetting the other in the application of it.

The great foundation of our religion is the hiſtory of our SAVIOUR, of his incarnation and miracles, and life, of his reſurrection from the dead, and aſcenſion into heaven, and interceſſion for us at the right hand of GOD; and the doctrines and articles concerning theſe, make up the main body of the chriſtian faith; and therefore, nothing can be more uſeful, than the explication of theſe, and a ſerious conſideration and meditation upon them.

In theſe words you have an account of our SAVIOUR's aſcenſion into heaven; concerning which we will conſider theſe three things.

Firſt, the circumſtances foregoing his aſcenſion.

Secondly, the circumſtances of his aſcenſion.

Thirdly, the conſequent benefits and advantages of it.

Firſt, the circumſtances foregoing his aſcenſion, "and when he had ſpoken theſe things, he was taken "up." This refers to the diſcourſe which our SAVIOUR had with his apoſtles, immediately before he was taken up from them into heaven, of which we have an account in the verſes before the text, ver. 4. Being aſſembled with them, and juſt ready to take his leave of them, he commands them "that "they ſhould not depart from Jeruſalem, but wait "for

r the promiſe of the FATHER, which they SER
ıd heard of him:" that is, they ſhould not diſ- CXCV
themſelves, 'till the HOLY GHOST, which
ad promiſed to ſend from his FATHER, was
: upon them, in thoſe miraculous gifts and
:rs, whereby they ſhould be qualified for the
'hing of the goſpel to the world.

nd when our SAVIOUR had given them this
ge, they put a queſtion to him, concerning a thing
h, notwithſtanding he had ſo plainly declared to
, that "his kingdom was not of this world,"
till run in their minds about the temporal reign
ıe MESSIAS, and a glorious kingdom by him
: ſet up among the Jews; ver. 6. "They aſked
him, ſaying, LORD, wilt thou at this time
tore the kingdom unto Iſrael?" To this our
IOUR gives them no direct anſwer, neither
ıe would, nor that he would not do what they
:ted; but gently reprehends their curioſity;
'. "It is not for you to know the times and
ſons, which the FATHER hath put into his
'n power." And inſtead of ſatisfying them in
s that did not concern them, he diſcourſeth to
about thoſe things which did concern them;
ly, how they ſhould be qualified and ſent forth
each the goſpel to the world, ver. 8. "But
ſhall receive power, after that the HOLY
IOST is come upon you, and ye ſhall be wit-
ſes unto me, both in Jeruſalem, and in all
dea, and in Samaria, and unto the utmoſt parts
the earth. And when he had ſpoken theſe
ıgs, he was taken up." Theſe are the circum-
s preceding his aſcenſion.

Secondly,

Secondly, we will conſider the circumſtances
aſcenſion, and they are theſe four.

I. That our SAVIOUR was taken up, wh
was bleſſing his diſciples, Luke xxiv. 51. "A
"came to paſs, while he bleſſed them, he was p
"from them, and carried up into heaven."

II. That he was taken up in the view c
diſciples, and while their eyes were attentively
upon him: "while they beheld, he was taken
ver. 9. And verſe 10. it is ſaid, "they lo
"ſtedfaſtly towards heaven, as he went up."

III. That he was taken up in a cloud: "a
"cloud received him out of their ſight."

IV. The place whither he went, ver. 11. "
"ſame JESUS which is taken up from you
"heaven;" which is elſewhere more particularl
preſſed, by declaring the dignity to which he
exalted in heaven, "being ſet down on the
"hand of GOD, and having all power in h
"and in earth committed to him." Theſe ar
chief circumſtances of his aſcenſion, which I
ſpeak briefly to.

I. That our bleſſed SAVIOUR was taker
while he was bleſſing his diſciples. This St. L
does not mention here in the hiſtory of the
having mentioned it before in his goſpel, to v
he refers us; Luke xxiv. 50, 51. ſpeaking of
SAVIOUR and his apoſtles; "and he led them
"as far as Bethany, and lift up his hands, and
"ſed them." Lifting up of the hands was a
mony uſed among the Jews, in bleſſing the pe
Levit. ix. 22. it is ſaid there, that "Aaron lif
"his hands towards the people, and bleſſed th
So our SAVIOUR here in imitation of the
cerem

ceremonies among the Jews: "and it came to "paſs, while he bleſſed them, he was parted from "them, and carried up into heaven." The firſt tidings of our SAVIOUR's birth were attended with praiſes to GOD, and bleſſings to men; "glory "to GOD on high, peace on earth, and good-"will towards men." And when he died, he breathed out his ſoul in bleſſings to his enemies; in the height of his ſufferings he was full of hearty prayers, and good wiſhes for thoſe who were the cauſe of them: FATHER, forgive them, for "they know not what they do." And after his reſurrection from the dead, juſt as he left the world, he was taken out of it, and tranſlated into heaven, with a bleſſing in his mouth: "while "he bleſſed them, he was parted from them, and "carried up into heaven." And indeed his whole life, all that he did, and all that he ſuffered, his coming into the world, and his going out of it, was all a bleſſing to mankind. "GOD ſent "him to bleſs us, in turning us away every one "from his iniquity." He was always wiſhing well to us, and doing well for us; "he went about do-"ing good."



A bleſſed pattern to us, "leaving us an example, "that we ſhould follow his ſteps:" a lovely and deſirable example; in imitation whereof, we ſhould endeavour that our whole life may be a bleſſing and benefit to mankind; and that when we leave the world, we may be found ſo doing as our LORD did, doing the work of heaven while we are going thither.

II. He was taken up in the view of his diſciples, and while their eyes were attentively fixed upon him; "while they beheld, he was taken up," ver. 9.

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And ver. 10. it is ſaid, "they looked ſtedfaſtly to-"ward heaven, as he went up." After the apoſtles were fully convinced, by ſeveral appearances of our SAVIOUR to them, and familiar converſation with them, that he was indeed riſen from the dead; that they might be fully ſatisfied that "he came from "GOD, and went to him," he was in their ſight, while he was ſpeaking to them, taken up into heaven. And this is no ſmall confirmation of the truth of our religion, that our SAVIOUR did not only work the greateſt miracles while he was alive, and after death roſe again, and converſed among men; but was viſibly taken up into heaven. So that if all things be duly conſidered, never did any man give ſo many evidences of his being ſent from GOD, as our bleſſed SAVIOUR did. He delivered the truth of GOD with a divine authority; and did the works of GOD with all imaginable evidence of a divine power; and with a divine patience ſubmitted to the will of GOD, enduring the greateſt ſufferings; and by the mighty power of GOD was raiſed from the dead; and in a viſible manner, by the ſame divine power, taken up into heaven.

III. He was taken up in a cloud: "he was taken "up, and a cloud received him out of their ſight." Which circumſtance, though it do not ſeem very material; yet does it fitly repreſent to us the difference between the two diſpenſations of the law, and of the goſpel. Elias was carried up "by a whirl-"wind" into heaven, in "a fiery chariot with "horſes of fire:" but our SAVIOUR "in a "cloud;" to ſignify to us the coolneſs and calmneſs of the goſpel-diſpenſation, in compariſon of that of the law; which difference our SAVIOUR had

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before obſerved to his diſciples, upon a remark-
occaſion, Luke ix. 54, 55. When they would
" called for fire from heaven" to have con-
d the Samaritans for refuſing to entertain our
OUR, as Elias had done in a like caſe, our
OUR, ſeverely reproves that fierce ſpirit of
, as by no means ſuitable to the goſpel: " ye
ow not what manner of ſpirit ye are of: for
: SON of man came not to deſtroy mens lives,
t to ſave them." And juſt anſwerable to the dif-
:e between the ſpirit of Elias and our SA-
R, was the different manner of their tranſlà-
nto heaven; the one gently received up " in a
ud;" the other violently taken up " by a
irlwind," carried in " a chariot of fire drawn
horſes of fire."

d there is likewiſe another difference not altoge-
nworthy of our obſervation. The bleſſing
Elijah left to Eliſha at his parting from him,
ıe promiſe of his ſpirit to be imparted to him,
ceived in very doubtful words, 2 Kings ii. 9.
jah ſaid to Eliſha, aſk what I ſhall do for thee,
ore I be taken away from thee. And Eliſha
l, let a double portion of thy ſpirit be upon
. And he ſaid, thou haſt aſked a hard thing;
ertheleſs, if thou ſee me when I am taken
m thee, it ſhall be ſo unto thee; but if thou ſee
not, it ſhall not be ſo." This was very doubt-
ıitable to the obſcurity of the law; but our
OUR, when he parted from his diſciples,
a plain and abſolute promiſe of the HOLY
T to them anſwerable to the clearneſs and
of the goſpel: " ye ſhall be baptized with the
LY GHOST not many days hence." So

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wiſely did GOD order all circumſtances concerning our SAVIOUR, that every thing belonging to him, every action that he did, and every circumſtance of it might have ſome important ſignification.

IV. The laſt circumſtance of our SAVIOUR's aſcenſion, is the place where he went, ver. 11. "This ſame JESUS which is taken up from you "into heaven." And this is elſewhere more particularly expreſs'd, by declaring the dignity to which he was exalted in heaven; "being ſet down on the right "hand of GOD, and having all power in heaven and "earth committed to him." Mark xvi. 19. "He "was received up into heaven, and ſat on the right "hand of GOD:" which phraſe ſignifies our SAVIOUR's being advanced in his humane nature, to an honour and dignity next to that of the divine majeſty; the right hand being eſteemed the place of greateſt honour. This exaltation of CHRIST, the apoſtle tells us, was conferr'd upon him as a reward of his great humiliation and ſufferings; Heb. xii. 2. "Who for the joy that was ſet before him endured "the croſs, and deſpiſed the ſhame, and is ſet down "on the right hand of the throne of GOD." And by virtue of this exaltation, the apoſtle proves him to be exalted in his humane nature above the angels, Heb. i. 3, 4. "When he had by himſelf purged "our ſins, he ſat down at the right hand of the "majeſty on high, being made ſo much better than "the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a "more excellent name than they;" that is, being advanced to a higher dignity; for name among the Hebrews ſignifies dignity and honour. So the apoſtle uſeth the word name, Phil. ii. 9, 10, 11. "Where-"fore GOD alſo hath highly exalted him, and given

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" him a name which is above every name, that at " the name of JESUS every knee ſhall bow, of " things in heaven and things in earth, and things " under the earth; and that every tongue ſhould " confeſs that JESUS CHRIST is LORD to the " glory of GOD the FATHER." So likewiſe, Eph. i. 20, 21. " Whom he raiſed from the dead, " and ſet at his own right hand in heavenly places, " far above all principalities, and powers, and might, " and dominion, and every name that is named, not " only in this world, but in that which is to come." And now, wherein this dignity doth conſiſt, the ſame apoſtle tells us in the next words; " that he hath put " all things under his feet, and given him to be head " over all things to the church;" which is the ſame with what our SAVIOUR told his apoſtles before his aſcenſion, " all power is given me in heaven " and in earth;" that is, GOD hath committed the government of the world into his hands, for the benefit and advantage of his church here in this world, and for the diſpenſing of rewards and puniſhments to good and bad men in the next life.

And though the apoſtles did only ſee him taken up, and received in a cloud out of their ſight, and were not witneſſes of his advancement and exaltation at the right hand of GOD; yet they had, and we have, ſufficient, aſſurance of it, both by what our SAVIOUR declared before his aſcenſion, and by the effects which followed after. Before he aſcended, he told them whither he was going, and what power and dignity would be conferred upon him, that " all power in heaven and earth was com- " mitted to him;" and that as an evidence of this exaltation at the right hand of GOD, and the power

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there conferr'd upon him, he would in a few
ſend down the HOLY GHOST upon them
ſenſible manner, and in great and ſenſible e
enabling them to ſpeak with tongues, and to
all ſorts of miracles. After this he was in their
taken up from them, and carried towards he
and ten days after, the HOLY GHOST, acco
to his promiſe, came down upon them in mirac
powers and gifts. So that here was abundant
dence to them of his exaltation in heaven,
having ſeen him taken up and carried thitherw
and after this finding the wonderful effects c
being there, and of the power which was conf
upon him.

The third and laſt thing to be ſpoken to, i
conſequent benefits of our SAVIOUR's aſce
and exaltation; and they are chiefly theſe three
ſending of the HOLY GHOST; his powerful i
ceſſion for us at the right hand of GOD; anc
confirmation of our faith, as to the truth of his
trine in general, and particularly as to his comi
judgment.

I. The ſending of the HOLY GHOST in r
culous powers and gifts upon the apoſtles, to qu
them for the ſpeedy and effectual propagation o
goſpel, and to give credit to them in the preac
of it. By the gift of tongues, they are enabl
preach the goſpel to all nations; and by the
miraculous powers, GOD bare witneſs to the
mony which they gave of our SAVIOUR's doc
and reſurrection. And this was a great benefit;
to this we owe the great bleſſing of the goſpel,
the ſpreading of the chriſtian religion through
world; and this was properly the fruit of

SAVIO

SAVIOUR's aſcenſion into heaven, and his exalta- SERM.
tion at the right hand of GOD, and of that royal CXCVI.
power and majeſty which he was inveſted withal. GOD in his wiſe diſpenſation of things having ſo ordered, that this dignity and power ſhould be the reward of our SAVIOUR's obedience and ſufferings; which may ſerve to explain to us that paſſage, John vii. 39. "This ſpake he of the SPIRIT, which "they that believe on him ſhould receive: for the "HOLY GHOST was not yet given, becauſe "JESUS was not yet glorified." The giving of theſe gifts of the HOLY GHOST, was purpoſely reſerved by GOD, to be an inſtance of that power and glory, wherewith our SAVIOUR was to be inveſted upon his aſcenſion into heaven, and exaltation at the right hand of GOD; and therefore our SAVIOUR tells his diſciples, that they ought not to be troubled at his departure, becauſe, till he had left them, the HOLY GHOST would not come, John xvi. 17. "I tell you the truth, it is expedient "for you that I go away: for if I go not away, "the comforter will not come unto you."

II. Another mighty benefit of our SAVIOUR's aſcenſion and exaltation, is his powerful interceſſion for us at the right hand of GOD. And this is a mighty advantage and comfort, to have a perpetual patron and advocate at the right hand of GOD, to plead our cauſe, to ſolicit our concernments, and repreſent our wants, and to offer up our prayers and requeſts to GOD, in the virtue of his meritorious ſacrifice; to have ſo good a friend in the court of heaven, in ſuch power and favour with the great king of the world. This under the law was ſhadowed by the high-prieſt's going into the holy of holies,

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once every year alone, carrying blood with him, to offer for the ſins of the people; anſwerably to which, our SAVIOUR is once for all enter'd into the heavens, to intercede with GOD for us, by the repreſentation of that ſacrifice which he offer'd for our ſins, and of that blood which was ſhed for us. So the apoſtle tells us, Heb. ix. 24. "That CHRIST "is not enter'd into the holy places made with "hands, which are the figures of the true; but into "heaven itſelf, to appear in the preſence of GOD "for us." And this is a mighty comfort to us under the guilt of our ſins, that "we have an advo"cate with the FATHER, JESUS CHRIST the "righteous, who is a propitiation for our ſins, and "for the ſins of the whole world." This is a great comfort under all trials and temptations, that "we "have not an high-prieſt that cannot be touched "with a ſenſe of our infirmities; but was in all "points tempted like as we are." He that is our mediator and interceſſor, knows by experience the infirmities of our nature and hath learned by his own ſufferings to compaſſionate ours.

And this is a mighty encouragement to our prayers, and gives us confidence and hopes of good ſucceſs in our addreſſes to GOD, that are offered by ſo powerful and prevalent a hand. So the apoſtle reaſons, Heb. iv. 14, 16. "Seeing then we have "a great high-prieſt that is paſſed into the hea"vens, JESUS the SON of GOD; let us come "boldly to the throne of grace, that we may ob"tain mercy, and find grace to help in time of "need."

In a word, this may animate us againſt all the enemies of our ſalvation, becauſe he that hath all power

power in heaven and earth is concerned for us, and is continually ſoliciting our cauſe with GOD, Heb. vii. 25. "Wherefore he is able to ſave them to the "utmoſt, who come unto GOD by him, ſeeing he "ever liveth to make interceſſion for us." SERM. CXCVI.

III. The aſcenſion of our SAVIOUR into heaven, is a mighty confirmation of our faith, both as to the truth of his doctrine in general, and particularly as to his coming again at the end of the world, to judge the quick and the dead, to reward the righteous, and to puniſh the ſinners and ungodly.

1. As to the truth of his doctrine in general. If after all the miracles of his life, and his reſurrection from the dead, any man can doubt whether he came from GOD, and was ſent by him to teach the world; yet this, methinks, is evidence beyond all exception, that GOD took him to himſelf, that he was viſibly taken up into heaven; and though the witneſſes of his aſcenſion did not ſee him in heaven, yet the ſending of the HOLY GHOST, according to his promiſe, was an abundant evidence that he was received up into glory. Upon this account it is that our SAVIOUR ſays, that the coming of the HOLY GHOST ſhould "convince the world "of ſin, for not believing in him," becauſe the ſending of the HOLY GHOST, was an evidence that he was in glory; and his being taken up into glory, was a demonſtration that he was a true prophet, and ſent from GOD, and conſequently that they were guilty of a great ſin, who did not believe in him. And,

2. This likewiſe is a great confirmation of our faith, as to our SAVIOUR's coming again at the

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end of the world, to judge the quick and the dead. St. Peter tells us, Acts x. 42. that our SAVIOUR after his reſurrection did particularly give in charge to his apoſtles, "to teſtify to the people; that it "was he that was ordained of GOD, to be the "judge of quick and dead." And what argument more proper to perſuade them of this, than to ſee him viſibly taken up into heaven; and at the very time of his aſcenſion, to be admoniſh'd by angels, that this ſame perſon whom they ſaw carried up into heaven, ſhould in the ſame viſible manner come down from heaven again at the end of the world? So the text tells us, that "while the apoſtles "looked ſtedfaſtly toward heaven, as he went up, "behold, two men ſtood by them in white ap-"parel," that is, two angels in the appearance of men, "which ſaid, ye men of Galilee, why ſtand "ye gazing up into heaven? this ſame JESUS "which is taken up from you into heaven, ſhall "ſo come in like manner, as ye have ſeen him go "into heaven;" that is, in a viſible manner, and in a cloud. For as "he was received up in a cloud "out of their ſight," ſo at his return to judge the world, men ſhall "ſee the SON of man coming in "the clouds of heaven," Matt. xxiv. 30. And this is a great confirmation of our faith of a future judgment; that our SAVIOUR, immediately after his reſurrection, declared himſelf to be "appointed by "GOD judge of quick and dead;" and when he was aſcended, the angels declared that "he ſhould "come again in like manner as they had ſeen him "taken up." So that they who believe his aſcenſion, cannot doubt of his return to judgment; nothing being more credible, than the ſaying of one whom

hom GOD raiſed from the dead, and viſibly took himſelf. SERM. CXCVI.

And now to make ſome reflexion upon what hath en delivered. The conſideration of our SAVIUR's aſcenſion into heaven, and exaltation at the ight hand of GOD, is very comfortable to all true hriſtians, in theſe two reſpects.

I. In reſpect of our condition in this world.

II. In reſpect of the happineſs of the next world.

I. In reſpect of our condition in this world. The hurch of CHRIST, and every particular member f it, every true chriſtian, is expoſed to a great many roubles and dangers in this world: but it is matter f great comfort to us, in the conſideration of all vils we are liable to, that we are under his patroage and protection, who hath "all power given him in heaven and earth." He who is "the head and defender of the church, is ſet down on the right hand of the majeſty of GOD, exalted far above principalities, and powers, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named in this world, and that which is to come;" ſo that e true church of CHRIST need not fear either e powers of this world, or the malice of devils, ecauſe we have a ſure friend, who is greater an all theſe, whom GOD hath made his vicegent, and hath "put all things under his feet," and th given the government of the world, and of all eatures, into his hands, for the good and benefit of s church; who is able to protect his church, and ery true member of it, againſt all the injuries of rth, and the malice of hell; and if he permit us any time to fall into ſufferings, he is able to pport us under them, and to reward us for them:

and

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and "if he be for us, who can be againſt us?" he that "died, yea rather that is riſen again, who is "even at the right hand of GOD, and maketh in-"terceſſion for us." Rom. xiv. 9. "For this end, "CHRIST both died, and roſe, and revived, that "he might be LORD both of the dead and liv-"ing;" and now that he is in heaven and clothed with majeſty and glory, he is not leſs concerned for us, than when he converſed with us upon earth, and ſuffered and died for us: for he is there in our nature, that nature in which he ſuffered more than any of us can do; and therefore we may with confidence make our applications to him in all our diſtreſſes and difficulties, becauſe he is nearly allied to us, "bone of our bone, and fleſh of our fleſh," and was once "tempted like ourſelves," and from the experience of his own trials and ſufferings, ſtill retains a quick ſenſe of the frailties and infirmities of mortality. This conſideration the apoſtle to the Hebrews makes uſe of, to ſupport chriſtians under all their perſecutions for the profeſſion of chriſtianity, Heb. iv. 14, 15. "Seeing then we have a great high-prieſt, "that is paſſed into the heavens, JESUS the SON of "GOD; let us hold faſt our profeſſion. For we have "not an high-prieſt that cannot be touched with the "feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points "tempted like as we are, yet without ſin."

II. The conſideration of CHRIST's aſcenſion and exaltation is likewiſe matter of comfort to us, in reſpect of the happineſs which we hope for in the next world. No religion that ever was in the world hath given men ſo ſenſible a demonſtration of a future life, and a bleſſed immortality in another world, as the chriſtian religion hath done, by the reſurrection

ction of our bleſſed SAVIOUR from the dead, SERM.
his viſible aſcenſion into heaven. This is a ſen- CXCVI.
argument, and levelled to the capacities of all
kind. The reaſonings of the philoſophers con-
ing the immortality of mens ſouls, and a future
after this life, beſides the uncertainty of them,
alſo this diſadvantage, that they are only calcu-
for the more refined and ſpeculative part of
kind: but every man is capable of the force of
argument, that he who declared to the world
ner life after this, and the happy condition of
men in another world, was himſelf raiſed from
lead, and viſibly taken up into heaven. And
it is no difficult matter for us to believe that
will raiſe us, and advance us to glory and hap-
s, when we conſider what an earneſt he hath
us of this, by "the working of that mighty
wer which he wrought in CHRIST, when he
ſed him from the dead, and ſet him at his own
ght hand in heavenly places."

then we believe that "CHRIST is aſcended
o heaven, and ſits at the right hand of GOD,"
is raiſe our minds above the vain delights and
ing enjoyments of this world, to the conſidera-
of thoſe better and more glorious things that
ove; let us often aſcend thither in our thoughts,
er "our SAVIOUR is gone before us, to
pare a place for us;" and from whence he hath
iſed "to come again" at the end of the world
receive us to himſelf, that where he is, there we
y be alſo."

t then we muſt endeavour to live as he did; if
pe to go to him, when we die. "Every man
t hath this hope in him, purifies himſelf, even
"as

SERM. CXCVI. "as he is pure." Let us then "have our converſa-
"tion in heaven, from whence alſo we look for a
"SAVIOUR, the LORD JESUS CHRIST;
"who ſhall change our vile body, that it may be
"faſhioned like unto his glorious body, according to
"the working of that mighty power, whereby he is
"able to ſubdue all things to himſelf."

To conclude; let us heartily thank GOD for the whole diſpenſation of our ſalvation, by the incarnation and doctrine, by the holy life and meritorious death of our bleſſed SAVIOUR, and by that demonſtration of "GOD's mighty power and good-
"neſs, which he wrought in CHRIST, when he
"raiſed him from the dead, and ſet him at his own
"right hand in heavenly places, far above all prin
"cipalities, and powers, and might, and dominion,
"and every name that is named, not only in this
"world, but alſo in that which is to come; having
"put all things under his feet, and given him to
"be the head over all things to the church, which is
"his body."

The conſideration whereof is (as you have heard) a mighty conſolation to us, under all the troubles and dangers to which the church of CHRIST is expoſed in this world. He who hath "all power com-
"mitted to him" by GOD, and is made "head
"over all things for the benefit and advantage of
"the church," we may be ſure, will have a particular care of it, and tender it as "his own body:" and as he is able, he is ready upon all occaſions to protect and defend his own religion, and the true profeſſors of it, againſt all the fury and malice of men and devils, ſo that "the gates of hell," the ſtrongeſt combinations and deepeſt conſpiracies of all the

the powers of darkneſs, "ſhall not finally prevail "againſt it." Here is the foundation of our hopes and confidence, that our redeemer is ſtrong, and that GOD hath given him a kingdom and power, that is paramount and ſuperior to all earthly kingdoms and powers; and though they ſhould conſpire together, and be of one mind, unite all their force, and "give "their power and ſtrength unto the beaſt, to make "war with the lamb and his company," that is, the true church and faithful ſervants of CHRIST; yet "the lamb ſhall overcome them, becauſe he is lord "of lords, and king of kings." SERM. CXCVI.

And let us likewiſe bleſs GOD for the wonderful reſtoration of his majeſty to the government of theſe kingdoms, who under CHRIST is the great defender of our faith and religion; and let us pay that duty and obedience, which becomes us, to a prince whom GOD hath ſo miraculouſly preſerved and reſtored; and pour out our moſt fervent prayers to GOD, that he would long preſerve him, and protect his perſon from all dangers, who is the great ſecurity of our religion, * and the life of all our hopes, and as truly as any prince ever was to any people, the light of our eyes, and the breath of our noſtrils; and that GOD would make him "wiſe as an angel "of GOD, to go in and out before this great people;" and grant to him, and all the people of this land, "to know in this our day the things that "belong to our peace, before they be hid from our "eyes."

* Preached towards the concluſion of the reign of king Charles II.

SER-

# SERMON CXCVII.

## Of the gift of tongues conferred on the apoſtles.

ACTS ii. 1, 2, 3, 4.

*And when the day of pentecoſt was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And ſuddenly there came a ſound from heaven, as of a mighty ruſhing wind, and it filled all the houſe where they were ſitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it ſat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the* HOLY GHOST, *and began to ſpeak with other tongues, as the* SPIRIT *gave them utterance.*

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ONE of the chief deſigns of the diſpenſation of GOD towards the Jews, and of the giving of the law to them by Moſes, was to be a type of the chriſtian church, and of the diſpenſation of the goſpel by the SON of GOD; and therefore no wonder, if there be a great correſpondence between them, and that the divine providence ſhould ſo order the event of things, that the ſeaſons of diſpenſing the great evangelical bleſſings, ſhould happen at the ſame times, when the great bleſſings of the law, which were the types of them, were diſpenſed and commemorated. Thus our SAVIOUR, who was "the lamb of GOD," was ſlain and offered up at the ſame time that the paſſover was kept, and the paſchal lamb was ſlain and offered up among the Jews; and the redemption of the world from the ſlavery

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ſlavery of ſin and ſatan, is celebrated by chriſtians, at the very ſame ſeaſon of the year, when the deliverance of the Iſraelites from the Egyptian ſlavery was comemorated by them: and as at the time of pentecoſt (which was fifty days after) the Jews were appointed to rejoice before the LORD, and to offer their firſt-fruits by way of grateful acknowledgment to GOD for the fruits of the earth, then newly gather'd in; ſo did GOD likewiſe at the ſame time impart the firſt-fruits of the HOLY SPIRIT to the apoſtles, who where to be the firſt and chief labourers in that ſpiritual harveſt, to which they were appointed by "the LORD of the harveſt:" and which is yet more remarkable, at the ſame ſeaſon that the law was delivered to the Jews from mount Sinai, and the firſt covenant eſtabliſh'd, namely, at the time of pentecoſt, as is commonly ſuppoſed by the Jewiſh doctors, and as may probably be collected from the text, Exod. xix. 1. I ſay, at that very time, the goſpel, which contains the terms of the new covenant, began to be publiſh'd from mount Sion, in as wonderful, though not ſo terrible a manner, as the law was given from mount Sinai. And thus it was foretold by the ancient prophets, Iſaiah ii. 3. and Micah iv. 2. that "out of Sion ſhould go forth the law, and the "word of the LORD from Jeruſalem."

I ſhall briefly explain the words, and as I paſs along make ſome ſhort obſervations upon them, and then fix upon that which is mainly intended in them, viz. this firſt and moſt miraculous gift of the HOLY GHOST; which was conferred upon the apoſtles when they were aſſembled together at Jeruſalem upon the day of * pentecoſt.

* *Preach'd on Whitſunday.*

"When

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" When the day of pentecoſt was fully come," that is, when the fifty days after eaſter were fulfilled, upon the fiftieth day, which was called " the day of " pentecoſt, they were all with one accord in one " place." " They were all," that is, all the twelve apoſtles; for upon them it was that the gift of tongues was beſtowed; becauſe they were appointed to be the chief publiſhers of the goſpel, having been eye-witneſſes of our SAVIOUR's miracles, and particularly of his reſurrection from the dead. There is no mention of any other in this chapter, but only of the twelve apoſtles; ver. 14. we find " Peter and the " eleven" ſpoken of; and ver. 37. " it is ſaid that " the multitude, who were aſtoniſhed at this miracle, " ſpake to Peter and the reſt of the apoſtles."

" They were all with one accord in one place." Unity is an excellent qualification and diſpoſition for the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD and his gifts; for which reaſon, the peace and good agreement of chriſtians is called by St. Paul, " the unity of the ſpi- " rit, in the bond of peace." When the apoſtles were " of one heart, and one mind," then the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD came down upon them in this wonderful manner.

Ver. 2. " And ſuddenly there came a ſound from " heaven, as of a ruſhing mighty wind." As they were together " waiting for the promiſe of the " FATHER," all on the ſudden there came a ſound, as of a ſtrong guſt of wind. This was a fit emblem of the divine SPIRIT; for to this our SAVIOUR had compared it, in his diſcourſe with Nicodemus, John iii. 8. " The wind bloweth where it liſteth, " and thou heareſt the ſound thereof; but canſt " not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it " goeth;

' goeth: ſo is every one that is born of the SPI- SERM.
' RIT." CXCVII.

" As of a ruſhing mighty wind." To ſignify to
s, that the publication of the goſpel was attended
ith the ſame divine preſence and power, that the
iving of the law was; but not with the ſame cir-
umſtances of terror, which the apoſtle to the He-
rews deſcribes, when he ſets forth to us the difference
etween mount Sinai and mount Sion, that is, be-
ween the two diſpenſations of " the law and the goſ-
' pel." Heb. xii. 18, 19. ſpeaking of mount Sinai,
om which the law was given, " ye are not come,
' ſays he, unto the mount, that might be touched,
' and that burned with fire, nor unto blackneſs, and
' darkneſs, and tempeſt, and the ſound of a trum-
' pet, and the voice of words;" that is, that ter-
ible voice of GOD, wherein the ten words of the law
ere deliver'd; " which voice then ſhook the earth,"
s the apoſtle tells us, ver. 26. " A voice ſo terrible,
' that they who heard it, earneſtly begged, that
' they might hear it no more." Theſe were all
ircumſtances of great horror: but at the coming
own of the HOLY GHOST, here was no trum-
et nor terrifying voice, no thunder, nor darkneſs,
or tempeſt, only the ſound as it were of a ſtrong
uft of wind, as a ſenſible ſignification of a divine
reſence and power.

" And it filled all the houſe where they were ſit-
' ting." " The whole houſe," to repreſent the
orld, which was to be filled with the ſound of the
oſpel, according to that of the pſalmiſt cited by
t. Paul, Rom. x. 18. where ſpeaking of the gene-
l publication of the goſpel, " their ſound, ſays he,

SERM. CXCVII. "went out into all the earth, and their words unto "the end of the world."

"It filled all the houſe." This is that, which, ver. 5. of this chapter, our SAVIOUR calls "bap-"tizing the apoſtles with the HOLY GHOST," ſo that they who ſat in the houſe were as it were immerſed in the HOLY GHOST, as they who were baptized with water, were overwhelmed and covered all over with water, which is the proper notion of baptiſm.

Ver. 3. "And there appeared unto them cloven "tongues, as it were of fire, and ſat upon each of "them." "Cloven tongues," to ſignify the diverſity and diſtribution of them; this gift being imparted to every one of the apoſtles: for it is ſaid, that theſe tongues "ſat upon each of them."

"Cloven tongues as it were of fire," to ſignify the penetrating virtue and efficacy of their preaching. And this is that which John the baptiſt calls "bap-"tizing with the HOLY GHOST, and with fire," meaning the deſcent of the HOLY GHOST upon the apoſtles, in the form of fiery tongues; divided, to ſignify the diverſity of them. At firſt men were all of one language; and the confuſion and diviſion of tongues, was a curſe and puniſhment upon them, and the cauſe of their diſperſion through the world; but now, GOD by the gift of ſeveral tongues deſigned to gather mankind together, and to unite them in one religion.

"And it ſat upon each of them." Theſe "cloven "fiery tongues ſat upon each of the apoſtles," that is, remained viſibly upon them for ſome time; to ſignify the permanency of this gift of tongues. It was not like ſeveral of the other miraculous gifts,

which did not conſtantly reſide upon them; for they had them not at all times, nor when they pleaſed, but as GOD was pleaſed to diſpenſe and communicate them: but this gift of tongues was conſtant, becauſe they had continual uſe of it; and it was common to all the apoſtles, becauſe they were to be the publiſhers of the goſpel, and the witneſſes of our LORD's reſurrection, which was the great miracle whereby the goſpel was to be confirmed. SERM. CXCVII.

Ver. 4. "And they were all filled with the HOLY "GHOST, and began to ſpeak with other tongues, "as the SPIRIT gave them utterance." "And "began to ſpeak with other tongues:" the vulgar tranſlation renders it, *variis linguis*, "with divers "tongues;" that is, they ſpake ſeveral languages beſides their own mother tongue, or as it is expreſſed in our SAVIOUR's promiſe to the apoſtles, Mark xvi. 17. "With new tongues." "Theſe ſigns," ſays our LORD before his aſcenſion, "ſhall follow "them that believe;" "they ſhall ſpeak with new "tongues;" that is, they ſhould all on the ſudden ſpeak languages which they had never learned, nor had any knowledge of before.

I know not who was the firſt author of that conceit, that the miracle was not in the ſpeakers, but in the hearers; that is, the apoſtles ſpake in their own mother tongue, (the Syriac) and the hearers of ſeveral nations heard them every one in their own language; which indeed muſt be acknowledged to be as great a miracle, or greater, than if the apoſtles had ſpoken ſo many different languages: but this ſeems to be a very groundleſs, and unreaſonable conceit, and very contrary to this relation of this miraculous gift, and to all the circumſtances of it. For

SERM. CXCVII. the text expreſly ſays, that "they ſpake with other "tongues," that is, in languages different from their mother tongue, in which they ſpake before, otherwiſe they could not be called "other, or new "tongues." And 1 Cor. xii. 28. the apoſtle, among the ſeveral gifts which GOD had beſtowed upon the church, mentions "diverſity of tongues," which had not been true, if the apoſtles had all ſpoken in one language. And ver. 30. he makes a difference between the gift of ſpeaking ſeveral languages, and interpreting things ſpoken in divers tongues. "Do "all, ſays he, ſpeak with tongues? do all interpret?" But if what the apoſtles had ſpoken in one language, had been heard by thoſe of ſeveral nations in their own language, there had been no need of interpretation. And chap. xiv. ver. 2. "He that ſpeaketh "in an unknown tongue, ſpeaketh not unto men, but "unto GOD; for no man heareth him;" that is, no man underſtandeth what he ſaith, GOD only knows it; whereas if they heard every one in their own language, they all underſtood what was ſaid. And ver. 13. "Wherefore let him that ſpeaketh in "an unknown tongue, pray that he may interpret." But what need of that, if every one heard what was ſpoken in his own tongue? And ver. 16. the apoſtle ſays, that "he that was unlearned, could not ſay "amen at giving of thanks in an unknown tongue; "becauſe he underſtood not what was ſaid." And ver. 27, "If any man ſpeak in an unknown tongue, "let it be by two, or at moſt by three, and that "by courſe, and let one interpret." All which plainly contradicts that fooliſh conceit, that the miracle of the gift of tongues was not in the ſpeakers, but the hearers.

That

That which ſeems to have given occaſion to this error, was, that they could not underſtand how any man ſhould at the ſame time ſpeak divers languages: but there is no ground at all to ſuppoſe ſo; becauſe it is not ſaid, that any of the apoſtles did at the ſame time ſpeak ſeveral languages, (which is impoſſible) but that the apoſtles ſpake ſeveral languages, ſo that the ſeveral nations then preſent heard ſome or other of the apoſtles ſpeaking in their own language. So that to trouble ourſelves no farther about this idle conceit, the miracle was not, that every one of the apoſtles did ſpeak ſeveral languages at the ſame time; but that they all ſpake on a ſudden languages which they had never learned before; ſo that the people of ſeveral nations, that were then preſent, did then hear ſome or other of the apoſtles ſpeaking to them in their own language. SERM. CXCVII.

Having thus explained the ſeveral expreſſions and paſſages in the text,

I come now to ſpeak to the main argument contained in them, viz. this miraculous gift which was conferred on the apoſtles, of ſpeaking all on the ſudden the languages of all nations, with whom they had occaſion to converſe, though they had never learned them before.

And in the handling of this argument, theſe following particulars will be fit to be conſidered, and inquired into by us.

Firſt, the ſtrangeneſs of this gift or miracle.

Secondly, the clear evidence of this miracle, that it was real, and that there was no manner of impoſture or deceit in it, nor could there be any ſuſpicion of it.

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Thirdly, the wonderful effect of it immediately, and upon the ſpot, upon the very day, and in the place where it was firſt wrought.

Fourthly, the great neceſſity and uſefulneſs of it.

Fifthly, the reaſon why it was the firſt of all the miraculous gifts, and ſo viſibly conferred upon the apoſtles, before any of the reſt.

Sixthly and laſtly, I ſhall inquire, whether there be any neceſſity now, and conſequently any probability of the renewing of this miracle, in order to the converſion of the infidel world, and thoſe many and great nations in the remoter parts of the world, which do ſtill continue ſtrangers and enemies to the chriſtian religion.

Firſt, the ſtrangeneſs of this gift or miracle. It was of that nature, that the like was never known in the world, neither before nor ſince the firſt ages of chriſtianity, upon any occaſion whatſoever; nor can we well imagine any other ſort of miracle that could probably affect men more, and ſtrike them with greater wonder and admiration, and have been a more ſenſible demonſtration of a divine power and preſence accompanying the apoſtles, than to ſee and hear them all on the ſudden perfectly to ſpeak ſo many languages, which they had never learned before.

Eſpecially if all the circumſtances of the thing be duly weighed and conſidered; that they who pretended to be endowed with this gift, were not ſtrangers newly arrived and come to Jeruſalem, who before they came thither might poſſibly by great ſtudy and pains have attained to the knowledge and ſkill of ſeveral languages, (each of them ſuppoſe two languages apiece) and have craftily combined together to impoſe upon the world, by the pretence and oſtentatio

of ſuch a miracle: but theſe perſons were known to all that dwelt in Jeruſalem, and had for a long time been taken notice of, as the diſciples and followers of JESUS, who was lately crucified among them; their education was known, and the meanneſs of their condition, that they were ſimple and illiterate perſons, who never had the advantage or opportunity of attaining to this ſkill in an ordinary way; and therefore it muſt be concluded to have been an extraordinary and ſupernatural gift. SERM. CXCVII.

Beſides, that this miracle was very publickly wrought, and the noiſe of it in a few hours drew together the ſtrangers of ſeveral nations, who being become proſelytes of the Jewiſh religion, dwelt at Jeruſalem; theſe all coming together, upon the noiſe and fame of this miracle, found it to be true, and as appears from the hiſtory, were ſo well ſatisfied of the reality of it, that a very great number, upon the occaſion of it, and upon that very day, became proſelytes to the chriſtian religion, and joined themſelves to the apoſtles and their followers, (who were then but few in number) and were preſently admitted into the chriſtian church by baptiſm, the uſual ceremony of admitting proſelytes among the Jews. This was a preſent and great effect, and is a great evidence and confirmation of the truth and reality of the thing: but this I ſhall have occaſion to ſpeak more fully to, when I come to the fifth particular which I propoſed.

I add farther, that our SAVIOUR ſeems to have reckoned this as one of the greateſt of miracles, and therefore to have reſerved it, for an inſtance and demonſtration of the glorious power which he was inveſted withal, after his aſcenſion into heaven; as may very probably be collected from that declaration, and

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promiſe which he made to his apoſtles, a little before his departure from them, John xiv. 12. "Verily, "verily, I ſay unto you, he that believeth on me, "the works that I do ſhall he do alſo, and greater "works than theſe ſhall he do, becauſe I go unto "my FATHER," that is, in order to the ſending of the HOLY GHOST," to endow them with proper "from on high," to qualify them for the publiſhing of the goſpel, which they were forbidden to enter upon till this promiſe was made good to them. But what were theſe "greater works," which he here promiſeth to enable them to do, after he was "gone "to his FATHER?" for he expreſly promiſeth, that they ſhould not only do "the works which he had "done, but greater works than thoſe:" and what could theſe be? Our SAVIOUR had wrought many and great miracles almoſt in all kinds imaginable; he had caſt out devils, and healed all ſorts of infirmities and diſeaſes; he had changed nature, by turning water into wine, and had ſtopp'd the courſe of it, by ſtilling the winds and the ſea by his word; and he had raiſed the dead; and now what work could that be which was "greater" than any of theſe? Even that which I am ſpeaking of, the miraculous power of ſpeaking all languages, without learning them; a thing never heard of in the world before. And this was the firſt ſenſible effect of the coming of the HOLY GHOST upon them, the firſt miraculous power with which he endowed his apoſtles, after he was aſcended into heaven, and gone to his FATHER; an evident teſtimony of the glory and power which he was inveſted withal, after he was taken up into heaven, and ſat down at the right hand of GOD, to ſignify both the honour and power which was conferr'd

conferr'd upon him, in that he enabled his apoſtles, SERM. CXCVII.
when he was abſent from them, to do that, which whilſt he was preſent with them, he had never enabled them to do, nor ever did himſelf; all which tends to advance this miracle, and to ſhew the greatneſs and ſtrangeneſs of it above any other. And unleſs we fix it upon this miracle, it will be hard, if not impoſſible, to give a good account of the accompliſhing of that ſolemn promiſe of our SAVIOUR to his diſciples, after he ſhould be gone to his FATHER, that is, after his aſcenſion into heaven; "verily, verily, I ſay "unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that "I do ſhall he do alſo, and greater works than theſe "ſhall he do, becauſe I go unto my FATHER." Now what miraculous work can be inſtanced in, that was done by the apoſtles, and was "greater" than any our SAVIOUR did, when he was upon earth, but this only of ſpeaking all languages on the ſudden, without ever having learned them? which conſideration alone does confirm me paſt all doubt, that our SAVIOUR in this promiſe meant the miraculous gift of tongues, which was the firſt gift that was conferred upon them, after he was aſcended into heaven, and gone to his FATHER. I proceed,

Secondly, to conſider the clear evidence of this miracle, that it was real, and that there could be no ſuſpicion of any manner of impoſture and deceit in it.

It was publickly wrought before many witneſſes, and thoſe the moſt competent of all other, becauſe they were highly prejudiced againſt the apoſtles, and great enemies to them, as being the diſciples of him whom they had ſo lately crucified as an impoſtor. They gave clear proof of this miraculous power in the preſence of great multitudes of ſeveral nations, who

SERM. CXCVII. who heard them every one ſpeaking to them in their own language: and beſides the preſent demonſtration of this miraculous gift, to thoſe of ſeveral nations that dwelt at Jeruſalem, they gave evidence of it in all places and nations whither they went preaching the goſpel; ſo that this miracle accompanied and continued with them, till the goſpel was made known to a great part of the then known world, and laſted for a whole age, and till there was no farther need and uſe of it.

But it may be ſaid, that though this was ſufficiently evident to them that dwelt at Jeruſalem, who knew the apoſtles, and the circumſtances of their education; yet it was not ſo credible to others, who lived remote from Jeruſalem, and neither knew the apoſtles, nor the manner of their education, nor were witneſſes of the miraculous riſe and beginning of this gift of tongues. Theſe could only hear them ſpeak in their language; but whether their knowledge of this language had been acquired by ſtudy, or was ſupernatural and infuſed, for this they had only common fame, and the apoſtles own word, which may ſeem to have been but a ſlender evidence for a thing ſo ſtrange. And ſo it muſt be acknowledged to be, if the apoſtles affirmation, that this gift was ſupernaturally conferred upon them, had not been otherwiſe countenanced and ſupported; as it was in a very extraordinary and remarkable manner, by their being endowed with a power to work other miracles of all kinds, which they did every where, and very frequently upon all occaſions. And this was ſufficient to give credit to what they affirmed, concerning this ſupernatural gift of tongues: for when they ſaw them work other miracles of all ſorts, they had no reaſon to

to doubt of the truth and reality of this miraculous gift of tongues, which was abundantly confirmed by the other miraculous powers with which they were endowed. So that the goſpel, wherever it came, carried its own evidence along with it, and was confirmed by the very manner of its conveyance and delivery; and well might men entertain it as a divine doctrine, when the very manner and means, whereby it was conveyed to the world, was ſo ſtrange and aſtoniſhing a miracle, as was never wrought in the world before, upon any occaſion whatſoever. And this will yet be farther evident, if we conſider in the

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Third place, the wonderful effect which this miracle immediately had upon the ſpot, and on the very day when it firſt appeared.

It had ſo glaring an evidence, and carried ſuch conviction in it, that the doctrine which they who were endowed with miraculous gifts did preach, was immediately received and entertained by a very great number of the hearers; who, upon the conviction of this great miracle, became proſelytes to this new religion, and were ſolemnly admitted to the profeſſion of it by baptiſm; as we read, ver. 41. of this chapter; where, after St. Peter had made an end of his ſermon, to the people upon this occaſion, it is ſaid, "then they that gladly received his word were bap-"tized; and the ſame day there were added unto "them about three thouſand ſouls." Here was a mighty effect "three thouſand" converted at one ſermon, being convinced by the evidence of this miracle. And it was a very immediate effect; for it is ſaid, that "the ſame day three thouſand were added "to the church." Here was an effect proportionable to the greatneſs and ſtrangeneſs of its cauſe; a mighty

victory

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victory gained over the prejudices of men, and powers of darkneſs, by the light and conviction this miracle, which our SAVIOUR ſeems to kept in reſerve for this great occaſion, when the pel and religion was to be firſt publiſh'd, and to r its ſolemn entrance into the world. Here was a l portion of firſt-fruits, and a great earneſt of tha ritual harveſt, which the apoſtles had began to r of which the firſt-fruits among the Jews were a t for their harveſt alſo was at this very ſeaſon of year; as I noted before.

Fourthly, we will conſider the great uſefulne this miraculous gift, for the more eaſy and ſp conveyance of the doctrine of chriſtianity, and diffuſing and ſpreading the knowledge of it in world; and this, if we conſider it, not as a mir but only as a means ſo very convenient to this poſe, that by the advantage of it, the goſpel n a greater progreſs in the ſpace of a few years, in humane probability could have been made wit it in many ages; and it was ſpread farther in th years, than could in reaſon have been expected in teen hundred, by natural and ordinary means. " mightily grew the word of GOD, and prevail being carried on in ſo powerful and ſupernatur manner.

Fifthly, we will conſider, why this was the miraculous gift, conferred upon the apoſtles mor ſibly, and before any of the reſt. The other n culous powers were only viſible in their effects; this was viſible, not only in the effects of it, but wiſe in the cauſe and the manner of its being ferr'd: " for the HOLY SPIRIT reſted upon th " in the form of fiery cloven tongues;" to ſig

not only the diverſity of languages which they ſhould be enabled to ſpeak, but the quick and piercing efficacy of their ſpeech. The reaſon of all which ſeems to be, becauſe this was the greateſt of all miracles, and therefore fit to be firſt: for, as I ſhewed before, this, in the judgment of our SAVIOUR (who beſt underſtood the different degrees of miracles) was greater than any of thoſe which he himſelf in his life time had wrought; and likewiſe, becauſe this miracle was of greater uſe than any of the reſt, and more neceſſary to the effectual diſcharge of their apoſtolical office, and to the eaſy ſucceſs, and more ſpeedy effect of it. For by this miraculous gift more eſpecially, the apoſtles were, as it were, conſecrated to their office, and made capable to diſcharge it with eaſe and effect; their office being to publiſh the doctrine of the goſpel to the world, and to be witneſſes of our SAVIOUR'S reſurrection from the dead, which was to be the great confirmation of his doctrine; neither of which they could, with any probability of effect and ſucceſs, have done without this miraculous gift: for what ſlow progreſs muſt they have made, and how little could they have advanced in this work, had they either done all by interpreters, or been put to have learned the languages of the ſeveral nations, to which they had been to preach, before they could have publiſhed this doctrine among them?

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The Jews, who were very zealous of their religion, (which was likewiſe from GOD, and was atteſted by miracles) upon occaſion of ſeveral calamities which befel them, and carried them into captivity, were diſperſed in ſeveral nations; and yet how lowly, for want of this gift, did they gain proſe-

lytes

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lytes to their religion? and how few did they convert to it in the ſpace of four or five hundred years? by which we may judge how little chriſtianity would have gained upon the world, had it not been countenanced and aſſiſted from heaven in this miraculous manner. I come now to the

Sixth and laſt thing which I propoſed to inquire into; namely, whether there be any neceſſity now, and conſequently probability of the renewing of this miracle, in order to the converſion of infidels, and the gaining over of thoſe many and great nations in the remoter parts of the world, who are ſtill ſtrangers and enemies to the chriſtian religion.

That which would induce a man to hope well in this caſe, is, that without ſome ſuch miraculous gift, there is little or no probability of the converſion of infidel nations; unleſs GOD ſhould be pleaſed, by ſome unexpected means, to bring over to chriſtianity ſome powerful prince of great reputation for his wiſdom and virtue; who by the influence of his example, and by his favour and countenance, might give advantages to the planting of it among his ſubjects. And yet conſidering the inveterate and violent prejudices of men againſt a new religion, ſuch an attempt would, in all humane probability, be more likely to end in the ruin of the prince, and the overturning of his government, than in the eſtabliſhment of a new religion. Of which kind there have been ſeveral inſtances very remarkable in Japan and Æthiopia, and perhaps in places and times nearer to us, and within our own memory.

But if any ſuch thing ſhould be attempted by private perſons, the undertaking would meet with ſuch inſuperable obſtacles, not only from the prejudices

dices and intereſts of men, but from the great difficulty of gaining languages ſo different from our own, that it muſt in all likelihood have a very ſlow progreſs, and at laſt fall to the ground, for want of proper and effectual means to carry it on. For though the morality of the chriſtian religion be admirable, and very apt to recommend itſelf to the unbiaſſed and impartial reaſon of mankind (if any ſuch thing were any where to be found;) yet * the death of the SON OF GOD is ſuch a ſtumbling-block, as is very hard for humane reaſon to get over. Of which the jeſuits in China were ſo ſenſible, that, according to their uſual ſincerity, they thought beſt to conceal that moſt eſſential part of the chriſtian doctrine, which relates to the death and ſufferings of our SAVIOUR. So I am ſure St. Paul took it to be, when he tells the Corinthians, that "he determined to know no-"thing among them, ſave JESUS CHRIST, and "him crucified." This it ſeems he looked upon as the moſt material and valuable part of the chriſtian religion, and of greateſt conſequence to be known by us. But the jeſuits it ſeems thought otherwiſe, and therefore concealed it from their converts. For which moſt ſhameful and unchriſtian practice, ſeveral of them were very lately under proſecution at Rome.

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* See ſermoncxciii. of this volume.

Beſides all this, † the matters of fact upon which the truth of chriſtianity does neceſſarily depend, as the birth, and life, and miracles, and death, and reſurrection of our bleſſed SAVIOUR, and his viſible aſcenſion into heaven: I ſay, theſe matters of fact, though we have a moſt credible hiſtory and relation of them brought down to us, do not carry ſo ſtrong and ſenſible a conviction in them, to thoſe who

† See the ſame diſcourſe.

SERM. CXCVII. who never heard of them before, as to be able to conquer and bear down a violent prejudice: nor is it in reaſon to be expected, that theſe things ſhould eaſily be admitted by thoſe, who are utter ſtrangers to our hiſtory of former times, and conſequently not fit to judge of what value they are.

I ſpeak not this to diſcourage any from uſing their beſt endeavours to propagate our religion among infidels, where the providence of GOD opens a door, and gives any opportunity for it. Among the many bad things that have been done in the church of Rome, there is one thing very much to their honour, that they have been at very great charge and pains in their miſſions for the converſion of infidel nations, eſpecially in the eaſtern parts of the world, to that which they account the true chriſtian religion. And if the matter had been as honeſtly managed, as I hope it was piouſly intended, and their charity and zeal had been equally warm for the converſion of the northern infidels, where there is nothing to be met with but froſt and cold, as it hath been for the converſion of thoſe parts of the world, where gold and ſpices abound, it had deſerved great praiſe, notwithſtanding their miſtakes in religion, and the great mixture of errors and corruptions in it.

And it is no ſmall reproach to the proteſtant religion, that there hath not appeared an equal zeal among us for this purpoſe; and that to our unwearied endeavours to promote the intereſt of trade in foreign parts, there hath not been joined a like zeal and induſtry for the propagating of the chriſtian religion; which might ſurely be attempted, with more than ordinary advantage, in thoſe places where we have ſo free a commerce.

It

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It is not good for men to be confident, where they are not certain; but * it ſeems to me not impoſſible, if the converſion of infidels to chriſtianity were ſincerely and vigorouſly attempted by men of honeſt minds, who would make it their buſineſs to inſtruct thoſe who are ſtrangers to our religion in the pure doctrine of chriſtianity, free from all humane mixtures and corruptions: it ſeems to me in this caſe, not all improbable, that GOD would extraordinarily countenance ſuch an attempt, by all fitting aſſiſtance, as he did the firſt publication of the goſpel: for as the wiſdom of GOD is not wont to do that which is ſuperfluous, ſo neither is it wanting in that which is neceſſary. And from what hath been ſaid upon this argument, the neceſſity ſeems to be much the ſame that it was at firſt.

* See the fore-cited diſcourſe.

I would not be miſtaken in what I have ſaid about this matter; I do not deliver it as poſitive, but only as probable divinity, no wiſe contrary to ſcripture, and very agreeable to reaſon.

Thus much may ſuffice to have ſpoken concerning this miraculous gift of tongues, conferred upon the apoſtles at the time of pentecoſt.

# SERMON CXCVIII.

## Of the coming of the HOLY GHOST, as an advocate for CHRIST.

JOHN xvi. 7, 8.

*Nevertheleſs, I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away. For if I go not away, the comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will ſend him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of ſin, and of righteouſneſs, and of judgment.*

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THESE words are part of our SAVIOUR's laſt ſermon, which he made to his diſciples a little before he left the world: and this ſermon is only recorded by this evangeliſt, who hath ſet it down at large in the 14th, 15th, and 16th chapters of his goſpel. The main ſcope of it is, firſt to perſuade them to the obedience and practice of that holy doctrine, which he had delivered to them while he was with them; and then, becauſe their hearts were full of ſorrow at the thoughts of his departure from them, knowing that for his ſake they ſhould be ill treated by the world, he arms them againſt theſe diſcouragements; he promiſeth, not long after his departure from them, to ſend down his HOLY SPIRIT upon them in miraculous powers and gifts, as a teſtimony to the world of the truth of his doctrine, and a clear conviction that he came from GOD; ver. 26. of the xvth chapter.

"But

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" But when the comforter (or rather the advocate) " is come, whom I will ſend unto you from the " FATHER, even the SPIRIT of truth, which " proceeds from the FATHER, he ſhall teſtify " of me. And ye alſo ſhall bear witneſs, becauſe " ye have been with me from the beginning." The teſtimony which the HOLY SPIRIT ſhould give to them, ſhould give credit and ſtrength to their teſtimony.

And this conſideration he makes uſe of to comfort them under the ſad thoughts of his departure, becauſe his abſence would be abundantly recompenſed to them, by the coming of the HOLY GHOST, which could not be till he had left the world: becauſe this comforter, or advocate, was to be ſent in his name, to come upon his account, and in his ſtead, to ſupply his abſence. So that though they were greatly troubled at the thoughts of his departure, there was no cauſe for it, when all things were conſidered; for in truth, it was for their advantage, that he ſhould depart from them, ver. the 6th of this chapter: " but becauſe I have ſaid theſe things unto you, " ſorrow hath filled your heart. Nevertheleſs, I tell " you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go " away: for if I go not away, the comforter will " not come unto you; but if I depart, I will ſend " him unto you. And when he is come, he will re- " prove the world of ſin, and of righteouſneſs, and " of judgment."

From which words, I ſhall conſider theſe two things.

Firſt, the neceſſity of CHRIST's leaving the world, in order to the coming of the HOLY GHOST: " if I go not away, the comforter will

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Secondly, the happy conſequence and effect of the coming of the HOLY GHOST: " and when he is " come, he ſhall reprove the world of ſin, and of " righteouſneſs, and of judgment." I ſhall a briefly as I can explain both theſe.

Firſt, the neceſſity of CHRIST's leaving the world, in order to the coming of the HOLY GHOST: " nevertheleſs, I tell you the truth; it is expedient for " you that I go away: for if I go not away, the " comforter will not come unto you; but if I de- " part, I will ſend him unto you." That it is the HOLY GHOST which is here ſpoken of, and that as a perſon and not as a quality, or power, or virtue, is plain from our SAVIOUR's diſcourſe all along this ſermon, in which he is ſpoken of under the notion of a perſon, and that in as plain and expreſs terms as CHRIST himſelf is. As the FATHER " ſent " CHRIST;" ſo he is ſaid " to ſend the HOLY " GHOST;" as CHRIST is ſaid " to depart," ſo the HOLY GHOST is ſaid " to come;" as CHRIST is called " an advocate," ſo the HOLY GHOST is ſaid to be " another advocate;" CHRIST our advocate to plead our cauſe with GOD, he CHRIST's advocate to plead his cauſe with the world, chap. xiv. 16, 17. " And I will pray the " FATHER, and he ſhall give you another com- " forter, that he may abide with you for ever." And who is that? " even the SPIRIT of truth." And chap. xv. 26. " But when the comforter is come, " whom I will ſend unto you from the FATHER, " even the SPIRIT of truth." And in the verſe immediately after the text, " howbeit, when he, " the

" the SPIRIT of truth, is come." But expreſly, SERM. chap. xiv. 26. he is called " the HOLY GHOST: CXCVIII. " but the comforter, which is the HOLY GHOST, " whom the FATHER will ſend in my name, he " ſhall teach you all things."

All the difficulty is concerning the word παράκλητος, which our tranſlation renders " the comforter." 'Tis true indeed, that the verb παρακαλεῖν is of a very large and unlimited ſignification; it ſometimes ſignifies " to comfort," very frequently " to preach, " teach, and exhort," and ſometimes " to plead as " an advocate the cauſe of another." And this ſeems to be the proper notion of the word παράκλητος, in this place, " the advocate or patron of a cauſe." one that pleads for the party accuſed. And in this ſenſe, and no other, CHRIST is called our παράκλητος, or " advocate with the FATHER," 1 John ii. 1. " If any man ſin, we have an advocate with the " FATHER, JESUS CHRIST the righteous." And as CHRIST is " our advocate with the FA- " THER" in heaven; ſo the SPIRIT is CHRIST's abvocate here on earth, and pleads his cauſe with the world. And it is very obſervable, that this very word " paraclete," though it be not an hebrew, but a greek word, is frequently uſed both by the chaldee paraphraſt, and other jewiſh writers, in this ſenſe of an advocate. And that this notion of the word agrees beſt with this place, I ſhall clearly ſhew, when I come to the ſecond head of my diſcourſe; namely, to ſhew the happy conſequence and effect of the coming of the HOLY GHOST, viz. the convincing of the world how injuriouſly they had dealt with CHRIST, and the clear vindication of his innocency, which is the proper office and work of an advocate.

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Having thus fix'd the notion of the word παράκλητος in this place, we will now enquire what neceſſity or expediency there was, that CHRIST ſhould leave the world, in order to the coming of the HOLY GHOST: "it is expedient for you that I go away: "for if I go not away, the advocate will not come "unto you; but if I depart, I will ſend him unto "you."

And of this I ſhall give an account in theſe two particulars:

I. From the method of the divine diſpenſation, in the redemption and ſalvation of man by JESUS CHRIST.

II. From the rational ſuitableneſs, and congruity of this diſpenſation.

I. From the method of the divine diſpenſation, in the redemption and ſalvation of man by JESUS CHRIST. Thus the ſcripture tells us, that GOD in his infinite wiſdom had deſign'd and order'd things, that the SON of GOD ſhould come into the world, and live in a mean and abject condition; that he ſhould be "deſpiſed and rejected of men," perſecuted and put to death; and that as a reward of all this ſubmiſſion and ſuffering, he ſhould be raiſed again from the dead, taken up into heaven, and placed "on "the right hand of the majeſty on high;" and that in the triumph of his aſcenſion, he ſhould "lead "captive" death and hell, and all the powers of darkneſs; and being enter'd into the higheſt heavens, and "ſet on the right hand of GOD," as an act of power and royalty, he ſhould ſend down his HOLY SPIRIT in miraculous gifts upon men, for the conviction of the world, that the doctrine which he commanded his apoſtles to publiſh to all nations was from GOD,

GOD. And therefore the apoſtle St. Paul tells us expreſly that the communication of theſe gifts of the SPIRIT was the proper effect and conſequent of our LORD's exaltation, and one of the firſt acts of royalty which he exerciſed, after he was poſſeſs'd of his glorious kingdom, Eph. iv. 7, 8. where ſpeaking of the various gifts of the SPIRIT, "unto every one of us, ſaith "he, is given grace, according to the meaſure of the "gift of CHRIST." For which he cites the prediction of David, Pſal. lxviii. 18. "Wherefore he "ſaith, when he aſcended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." And "he "gave ſome apoſtles and ſome prophets, and ſome "evangeliſts, and ſome paſtors and teachers." So that we plainly ſee, that this was the diſpenſation of GOD, and the method which his wiſdom had pitched upon, that our LORD ſhould firſt leave the world, and be taken up into glory, and then ſend down the HOLY GHOST, in the plentiful effuſions of miraculous gifts. So this evangeliſt expreſly tells us in another place, which gives great light to this text, John vii. 39. "But this, (ſays he) ſpake he of the "SPIRIT, which they that believe on him ſhould "receive: for the HOLY GHOST was not yet given, "becauſe JESUS was not yet glorified." Implying, that according to the divine diſpoſal, it was ordered firſt, that CHRIST ſhould be glorified, and being inveſted in his kingdom and glory, that then he ſhould do acts of grace, and like a king at his coronation, ſcatter and diſpenſe his gifts among men, by ſending down his HOLY SPIRIT among them. And accordingly we find St. Peter, Acts ii. after that he HOLY GHOST came down upon them, giving his account of it; ver. 32, 33. "This JESUS hath

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" GOD raiſed up, whereof we all are witneſſes: " therefore being by the right hand of GOD exalted, " and having received of the FATHER the pro- " miſe of the HOLY GHOST, he hath ſhed forth " that which ye now ſee and hear;" meaning the gift of tongues; ſo that he reſolves it into the diſpenſation of GOD, who had thus deſigned and ordered things. And therefore in the

Second place, I ſhall ſhew, that this diſpenſation is very congruous and ſuitable to the divine wiſdom. For as it was convenient, that the SON of GOD ſhould aſſume our nature, and come into the world, and dwell among us, that he might reform mankind, by the purity of his doctrine, and the pattern of his holy life; and likewiſe that he ſhould ſuffer death, for the expiation of ſin, in ſuch a manner, as might not only advance the mercy, but aſſert and vindicate the holineſs of GOD, and teſtify his great hatred and diſpleaſure againſt ſin: ſo likewiſe after he had thus abaſed himſelf to the loweſt degree of meanneſs and ſuffering, it was very ſuitable to the divine goodneſs, to reward ſuch great ſufferings with great glory, by raiſing him from the dead, and taking him up into heaven; but it was not fit, when he had left the world, that the great work for which he came into it, ſhould be given over, and come to nothing, for want of effectual proſecution, without any fruit and effect of ſo much ſweat and blood. And therefore, though " it hath pleaſed the LORD to bruiſe him, " and put him to grief," as the prophet expreſſeth it, yet the divine wiſdom had ſo order'd things, that after " he had made his ſoul an offering for ſin, he " ſhould ſee his ſeed, and prolong his days, and the " pleaſure of the LORD ſhould proſper in his " hands;"

ands;" that "he ſhould ſee ſome fruit of the SERM.
ravel of his ſoul, and be ſatisfied," as the prophet CXCVIII.
tels, Iſaiah liii. 10. So that as it was expedient,
he ſhould die and depart this life; ſo it was
requiſite afterwards, that he who had begun this
t and good work, of the redemption and ſalvation
ıan, ſhould take care to have it ſtill proſecuted and
ied on: and accordingly, when he was aſcended in-
eaven, he ſtill promotes the ſame deſign, *per vicari-*
*am Spiritûs Sancti*, as Tertullian calls it, "by ſend-
ıg the HOLY GHOST, as his deputy," for the ma-
ng of this work, and the propagating and eſtabliſh-
of that religion which he had planted in the world.
OD foreſaw that the greateſt part of the jewiſh
ın would reject CHRIST and his doctrine, and
they would put him to death, as a deceiver and
ɔſtor; and becauſe it was expedient, that there
ld be ſuch an expiatory ſacrifice for ſin, and that
ne man ſhould die for all men," GOD was wil-
to permit his SON to be thus diſhonourably and
ſtly treated, and "by wicked hands to be cruci-
ed and ſlain;" becauſe he knew very well, how
ıake the malice of men ſubſervient to his own
ious purpoſe and deſign; but yet he was not wil-
, that ſo much innocency and goodneſs ſhould al-
ı lie under this reproach; from which if he had
ɔeen vindicated, the deſign of the goſpel had fallen
ıe ground, and preſently come to nothing: and
:fore, as a reward of his obedience and ſub-
on to the will of GOD, in theſe dreadful ſuffer-
, in this cruel and diſhonourable uſage, GOD
iſh'd him with this means of vindicating himſelf
his doctrine; he gave him power to ſend his
,Y SPIRIT into the world, who ſhould diſtri-
bute

SERM. CXCVIII. bute miraculous gifts among his apoſtles and followers, that ſo both he and his doctrine might be effectually vindicated to the world, and a way made for the more ſpeedy ſpreading and propagating of it.

So that we plainly ſee, that the wiſdom of GOD had ſo ordered this whole diſpenſation, that every part of it, the birth, the life, and death, and reſurrection, and aſcenſion of our LORD, and the ſending of the HOLY GHOST, are all ſubſervient to one another, and to the whole deſign, viz. the reformation and ſalvation of mankind.

I have done with the firſt thing I propounded, the neceſſity of CHRIST's leaving the world, in order to the coming of the HOLY GHOST. I ſhall now proceed to the

Second thing I propoſed, the happy conſequence and effects of the coming of the HOLY GHOST. "When he is come, he will reprove the world of "ſin, and of righteouſneſs, and of judgment." There is a great difficulty in theſe words, and therefore I ſhall endeavour, as well as I can, to explain them, and then draw ſome uſeful inferences from the main doctrine contained in them.

For the explication of them. "And when he," that is, the HOLY GHOST, "the advocate" mentioned before; "ſhall come," that is when the promiſe of the FATHER concerning the coming of the HOLY GHOST upon the apoſtles ſhall be accompliſh'd, "he ſhall reprove the world;" the word is ἐλέγξει, which I think may much more properly be render'd convince, "he ſhall convince the world." And ſo it is uſed by this evangeliſt, John viii. 46. "Which of you, ſays our SAVIOUR, convinceth "me of ſin?" The very phraſe uſed in the text,

"he

" he ſhall convince the world of ſin." And the ſame word is alſo uſed in the ſame ſenſe by St. Paul, Tit. i. 9. ἐλέγχειν ἀντιλέγοντας, " to convince gain-" ſayers." And this certainly is much more agreeable to the ſcope of this place. For though " to re-" prove the world of ſin," be a current expreſſion; yet " to reprove the world of righteouſneſs, and of " judgment," are very hard phraſes, and I doubt, not intelligible; but to convince an adverſary, or to ſatisfy a court, of the falſhood of the accuſation and charge brought againſt the party accuſed, that is, to vindicate and juſtify him in his cauſe, this is the proper act of an advocate.

So that the great end of the coming of the HOLY GHOST, who is here called the advocate, is " to convince the world. He ſhall convince the world," that is, both Jews and Gentiles, who joined in their enmity againſt CHRIST, and agreed to put him to death. In theſe three points, " concerning ſin, and righteouſneſs, and judgment." The expreſſion is ſhort, and ſomewhat obſcure, and ſeems (as Grotius and other learned men have not improbably thought) to allude to the three ſorts of cauſes and actions among the Jews.

In the firſt, to publick actions concerning criminal matters, among which was the caſe of believing or rejecting prophets. " He ſhall convince the world of " ſin, becauſe they believed not in me;" that is, he ſhall convince the world that I was a true prophet ſent from GOD, and no impoſtor; and conſequently, that they were guilty of a great contempt of GOD, and a horrible murder, in putting me to death.

In the ſecond, there ſeems to be an alluſion to that ſort of private actions, which referr'd to the vindicating of innocency from falſe teſtimony and accuſation,

SERM. CXCVIII. cuſation, which are called by the name of righteouſneſs. "He ſhall convince the world of righteouſneſs."

In the third, to that ſort of actions, which referr'd to the vindication and puniſhment of injuries, by way of retaliation upon him that did the injury, and which are called κρίσεις, or judgments. "He ſhall convince "the world of judgment, becauſe the prince of this world is judged."

But to explain theſe things more particularly.

1. "He ſhall convince the world of ſin, becauſe "they believe not on me;" that is, of the great ſin they were guilty of, in rejecting this great prophet, and condemning him as a ſeducer and impoſtor. And of this they would remarkably be convinced, when they ſhould ſee the predictions of CHRIST, fulfill'd, particularly that of ſending the HOLY GHOST, and of that terrible vengeance which ſhould afterwards be executed on the jewiſh nation, for rejecting the Son of GOD. The firſt of theſe we find eminently fulfilled upon the coming of the HOLY GHOST upon the apoſtles on the day of pentecoſt, Acts ii. For when the apoſtles by a ſudden inſpiration ſpake with other tongues, the Jews, and proſelytes, who ſaw and heard them, were very much amazed at it, ver. 7. and from this miraculous power of the HOLY GHOST ſo viſible upon them, St. Peter takes occaſion to convince the Jews, of their great ſin in rejecting the meſſias, and putting him to death, ver. 32, 33. "This JESUS, ſaith he, hath GOD raiſed up, "whereof we all are witneſſes: wherefore being by "the right hand of GOD exalted, and having re-"ceived of the FATHER the promiſe of the "HOLY GHOST, he hath ſhed forth this, which "ye now ſee and hear." From whence he concludes,

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ver. 36. "Therefore let all the houſe of Iſrael know "aſſuredly, that GOD hath made that ſame JESUS, "whom ye have crucified, both LORD and "CHRIST." That is, by this you may be convinced, that he whom you crucified, as a falſe prophet, was the true meſſias. Upon this we find, ver. 37. that "when the Jews heard this, they were prick'd "at their hearts, and ſaid unto Peter, and the reſt "of the apoſtles, men and brethren, what ſhall we "do to be ſaved? Thus you ſee the firſt effect which our SAVIOUR foretold of the coming of the HOLY GHOST, fulfilled in a moſt eminent manner; for upon this ſermon, three thouſand of the Jews being "convinced of their great ſin, in not be-"lieving on him, were baptized in his name."

II. "He ſhall convince the world of righteouſ-"neſs;" that is, of the innocency of that holy and juſt perſon, whom they had condemned as a malefactor. "Of righteouſneſs, becauſe I go to the FATHER;" that is, this ſhall be an evidence to the world of my innocency of thoſe crimes, with which I was charged; that I am taken up into heaven, and ſeated at the right hand of GOD, where I ſhall remain for ever, out of the reach of their malice and injury. "Becauſe I go to the FATHER, and ye "ſee me no more;" that is, I ſhall be there, where their malice cannot reach me. For ſo he tells the Phariſees, when they came to apprehend him, John vii. 33, 34. "Yet a little while am I with you, and "then I go unto him that ſent me: ye ſhall ſeek "me, and ſhall not find me; and where I am, thi-"ther ye cannot come."

And this vindication of his innocency, was begun by the miracles which immediately follow'd his death, upon

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upon which "the centurion glorified GOD, ſaying, "certainly this was the SON of GOD," as St. Matthew hath it; or, as St. Luke, "this was a righteous "man," Luke xxiii. 47. And not only the centurion, but all the people, ver. 48. "And all the people "that came together to that ſight, beholding the "things which were done, ſmote their breaſts, and "returned." But the great vindication of his innocency was his reſurrection, which delivered him from that unjuſt ſentence of death which was paſt upon him, by raiſing him up to life again. And this is particularly aſcribed to the HOLY GHOST, Rom. i. 4. "And was mightily demonſtrated to be the Son "of GOD, by the SPIRIT of holineſs, in his "reſurrection from the dead." Eſpecially if we conſider, that he was afterwards taken up viſibly into heaven, and there inveſted with royal power and dignity; of which he gave plentiful evidence, in the miraculous gifts of the HOLY GHOST, poured forth upon the apoſtles: which was a ſtanding demonſtration to the world of his innocency and righteouſneſs, ſince GOD had taken him up to himſelf, and "ſet him at his own right hand, and committed all "power to him in heaven and earth."

III. "He ſhall convince the world of judgment, "becauſe the prince of this world is judged." He that uſurped the authority of GOD in the world, and by his inſtruments had procured CHRIST to be condemned as a counterfeit king, is himſelf dethroned and condemned; "the prince of this world is judged." He that thought to have deſtroyed the SON of GOD, by putting him to death, is by this very means deſtroyed himſelf. So the apoſtle tells us, Heb. ii. 14. that "CHRIST through his death," that is, upon, occaſion

occaſion of his death, and his reſurrection from the dead conſequent upon it, "hath deſtroyed him that "had the power of death, that is, the devil." SERM. CXCVIII.

But moſt remarkably was "the prince of this "world judged and caſt out," when after he had ſo long uſurped the name and worſhip of GOD in the world, he was by that mighty power of the SPIRIT of GOD, which accompanied the preaching of the goſpel, thrown out of his kingdom; and wherever the doctrine of CHRIST came, the idolatry of the world was not able to ſtand before it, but fell down, like "Dagon before the ark." And that this is the meaning of judgment here, is plain from the ſame evangeliſt, chap. xii. 31, 32. "Now "is the judgment of this world; now ſhall the "prince of this world be caſt out. And if I be lifted "up from the earth, I will draw all men unto me." Where our SAVIOUR explains the "judgment of "this world," by the "caſting out Satan" out of that power and authority which he had uſurped in the heathen world by his idolatrous worſhip: and therefore our SAVIOUR foretels, that "when he was "lifted up from the earth," that is, after he was crucified, and raiſed from the dead, and taken up into heaven, "he would draw all men to him;" that is, his religion ſhould prevail wonderfully in the world, and be entertained in all nations. And this was moſt remarkably accompliſhed, by the wonderful progreſs of the goſpel, and ſpeedy downfal of idolatry in the world, "not by might, nor by power, but by the "SPIRIT of the LORD." The acknowledgment of Porphyry, that bitter enemy of chriſtianity, as it is reported to us by Euſebius, is very remarkable, "that ſince one JESUS began to be worſhipped,

"they

SERM. CXCVIII. "they found no publick benefit from their gods; "their miracles, and their oracles ceaſed." This our SAVIOUR foreſaw, and foretold, when he appointed and ſent forth the ſeventy diſciples to preach the goſpel, Luke x. 18. "I beheld Satan like lightning "to fall from heaven," to expreſs to us the ſudden demoliſhing of his kingdom, and the quick and ſpeedy overthrow of idolatry in the world. And thus I have explained, as briefly as I could, this difficult paſſage, concerning the HOLY GHOST's "convincing the world of ſin, of righteouſneſs, and "of judgment."

I ſhall only draw two or three inferences from what hath been delivered, and ſo conclude.

I. We have great reaſon to adore the wiſdom and goodneſs of GOD, in the diſpenſation of the goſpel; that by the ſending down of his HOLY SPIRIT, to endow the firſt publiſhers of his heavenly doctrine, with ſuch miraculous powers and gifts, he hath given ſuch abundant teſtimony to the truth of our religion, and ſuch firm grounds for our faith to rely upon. Had GOD left the chriſtian religion to have been propagated only by its own rational force upon the minds of men, what a ſlow progreſs would it in all probability have made? How little belief would the apoſtles naked teſtimony of our LORD's reſurrection from the dead, without any other demonſtration or proof, have gained while they were alive, much leſs after their death? How unable would their doctrine, deſtitute of divine teſtimony, as well as of all humane advantages, have been to have conteſted with the luſts and intereſts of men, the wit of the philoſophers, and the powers of the princes of this world, which all ſet themſelves againſt it? How could it, with any hope

hope of ſucceſs, have encountered the malice of men and devils, which was ſo active and buſy, by all poſſible violence, and by all imaginable arts to root it out of the world? Had the apoſtles of our LORD only gone forth, in the ſtrength of their own intereſt and eloquence, (which in poor and unlearned men muſt needs be very ſmall) how little could they have contributed to the carrying on ſo great and difficult a work? Nay, had they not been ſupported, and born up in their ſpirits by a mighty ſtrength above their own, had not their commiſſion been ſealed by the miraculous power of the HOLY GHOST, which upon all occaſions ſhewed forth itſelf in them, to the wonder and aſtoniſhment of men, and was a teſtimony from heaven to them, that they were the ambaſſadors of GOD to men, ſpecially empowered and commiſſioned by him for that work, they could not but have been diſcouraged by the oppoſition and difficulties they met withal, and they might with Moſes have declined the ſervice, and deſired GOD to ſend his meſſage by others, that were fitter and better qualified to deliver it; and after ſome vain, and unſucceſsful attempts, to propagate the belief of their doctrine, they would have given it over, and been aſhamed of their raſh undertaking. So St. Paul intimates, that had not the mighty power of GOD accompanied their preaching, and made it effectual to the converſion and ſalvation of men, they would have been tempted to have been "aſhamed of the goſpel "of CHRIST." SERM. CXCVIII.

But then we muſt remember, that it is the doctrine of CHRIST which is thus confirmed, and not the doctrines and traditions of men. For had the concealment of the doctrine of CHRIST, and the ſerv-

SERM. CXCVIII.

ing of GOD in an unknown tongue, been any part of the apoſtles doctrine, the gift of tongues had not been a confirmation of this doctrine, but a contradiction to it; had they preached tranſubſtantiation, and the renouncing of our ſenſes, in order to the belief of it, miracles could have given no credit to it: for that which depends upon the certainty of ſenſe (as miracles do) cannot be a competent argument, to prove that which is contrary to ſenſe; for that which makes me ſure of the miracle which ſhould prove this doctrine, does at the ſame time make me equally ſure that this doctrine is not true. If there were no other evidence, that tranſubſtantiation is no part of the chriſtian doctrine, this to a wiſe man would be ſufficient, that what proves the one, overthrows the other; and that miracles, which are certainly the beſt, and higheſt external proof of chriſtianity, are the worſt proof in the world of tranſubſtantiation, unleſs a man can renounce his ſenſes, at the ſame time that he relies upon them; for a man cannot believe a miracle, without relying upon his ſenſes, nor tranſubſtantiation, without renouncing them: and never were any two things ſo ill coupled together, as the doctrine of chriſtianity, and that of tranſubſtantiation, becauſe they draw ſeveral ways, and are ready to ſtrangle one another. The main evidence and confirmation of the chriſtian doctrine, which is miracles, is reſolved into the certainty and teſtimony of our ſenſes; but this evidence is clear and point blank againſt tranſubſtantiation.

II. The conſideration of what hath been ſaid, convinceth men of the great ſin of infidelity, and the unreaſonableneſs of it, after ſo clear conviction and demonſtration as GOD hath given to the world of

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the truth of chriſtianity. That the goſpel was planted and propagated in the world in ſo wonderful a manner, and prevailed, notwithſtanding all the oppoſition that was made againſt it: the remarkable and terrible deſtruction of Jeruſalem, according to our SAVIOUR's prediction: the ſeveral attempts of rebuilding the temple, particularly by Julian the apoſtate, in deſpite of chriſtianity, and to confute our SAVIOUR's prediction, ſo remarkably fruſtrated, and reſiſted from heaven, by fire flaming out of the foundation, and conſuming the workmen, ſo that they were forced to deſiſt; and this recorded by a heathen hiſtorian, Ammianus Marcellinus: the diſperſion of the jewiſh nation, and their continuing for ſo many ages ſeparate and diſtinct from all other people, for a ſtanding accompliſhment of our SAVIOUR's propheſy, and a teſtimony to all ages of the truth of chriſtianity. Theſe, with many more arguments I might mention, are a clear evidence to any one that does not abſolutely wink and ſhut his eyes againſt the light, that the doctrine of chriſtianity came from GOD.

III. They who believe the goſpel, are inexcuſable if they do not obey it, and live according to it. This is the great end of all the miracles which GOD hath wrought for the confirmation of chriſtianity; that by the belief of the goſpel, men might be brought "to "the obedience of faith," and live conformably to the precepts of that holy religion, which the SON of GOD, by ſo many miracles, hath planted and preſerved in the world. The infidelity of men will be a heavy charge upon them, at the judgment of the great day, and GOD will condemn them for it: but we that profeſs to believe the goſpel, and live con-

SERM. CXCVIII.

trary to it, ſhall not only be condemned by the judgment of GOD, but by the ſentence of our own conſciences. Our profeſſion to believe the goſpel, will be an aggravation of our diſobedience to it, and every article of our creed will be a ſore charge againſt us; and that faith, which was ordained to juſtify us, will be our great condemnation at the great day.

Therefore, as the apoſtle to the Hebrews argues, "we ought to give the more earneſt heed to the "things which we have heard, leſt at any time we "fall away," either by infidelity or impiety of life; "for if the word ſpoken by angels was ſtedfaſt," that is, if diſobedience to the law of Moſes was ſo ſeverely puniſhed, "and every tranſgreſſion and diſobe-"dience received a juſt recompence of reward: how "ſhall we eſcape, if we neglect ſo great ſalvation, "which was at firſt ſpoken by the LORD, and was "confirmed afterwards by them that heard him? "GOD alſo bearing them witneſs, both with ſigns "and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts "of the HOLY GHOST? For, if we ſin wilfully, "after we have received the knowledge of the truth, "there remains no more ſacrifice for ſin, but a cer-"tain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery in-"dignation, which ſhall devour the adverſaries. He "that deſpiſed Moſes, died without mercy, under "two or three witneſſes. Of how much ſorer pu-"niſhment ſhall we be thought worthy, if we tread "under foot the SON of GOD; and count the blood "of the covenant, whereby we are ſanctified, an un-"holy thing, and offer deſpite to the SPIRIT of "Grace! It is a fearful thing, to fall into the hands "of the living GOD. But, beloved, I hope better "things of you, and things that accompany ſalva-

"tion,

" tion, though I thus ſpeak, and that you are not
" of the number of thoſe, who draw back unto per-
" dition, but of them that believe to the ſaving of
" your ſouls."

# SERMON CXCIX.

## Of the coming of the HOLY GHOST, as a guide to the apoſtles.

JOHN xvi. 12, 13.

*I have yet many things to ſay unto you, but you cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the* SPIRIT *of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth.*

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OUR SAVIOUR having before declared to his diſciples the great expediency of his leaving the world, in order to the coming of the HOLY GHOST, ver. 7. he tells them in the next place, what the office of the HOLY GHOST ſhould be. In reference to CHRIST, he ſhould be an advocate: and in reference to them, he ſhould be a guide or teacher.

1. In reference to CHRIST, he ſhould be " an " advocate" to plead the cauſe of CHRIST and of his doctrine, and to vindicate them to the world, ver. 8, 9, 10, 11. " And when he is come he will " convince the world of ſin, and of righteouſneſs, " and of judgment: of ſin, becauſe they believe not " in me: of righteouſneſs, becauſe I go to my FA- " THER, and ye ſee me no more: of judgment,

SERM. CXCIX. "because the prince of this world is judged." All which I have formerly handled and explained at large.

2. In regard to the apostles; the HOLY GHOST is promised to be "a guide and teacher," to reveal to them, and to instruct them in some truths which our SAVIOUR, whilst he was with them, had not so fully acquainted them withal, because of their present incapacity and unfitness at that time to receive them. "I have many things to say unto you, but you can-"not bear them now. Howbeit when he, the "SPIRIT of truth, is come, he will guide you into "all truth."

In the handling of these words, I shall do these two things.

First, I shall endeavour to explain the meaning of them.

Secondly, I shall draw some inferences from them.

First, I shall begin with the explication of them; in order whereunto it will be requisite to inquire into these two things.

I. What those things probably were, which our SAVIOUR did not reveal and declare to his disciples, because they could not then bear them.

II. What is the meaning of this promise, "that "the SPIRIT of truth shall guide them into all "truth."

I. What those things probably were, which our SAVIOUR did not reveal and declare to his disciples, because they could not then bear them. Our SAVIOUR does not express particularly what those things were, nor can it be expected he should have done so; for then he had declared them to them, which he tells us he would not do; but the text

gives us two marks to direct our inquiry concerning them.

1. That they were ſuch things as the diſciples at that time were incapable of. "I have many things yet "to ſay unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." So that it ſeems they were ſuch truths, as the diſciples were prejudiced againſt upon ſome account or other; moſt probably by reaſon of their education in the jewiſh religion, and ſome principles which they had imbibed from the teachers and interpreters of their law.

2. They were ſuch truths as, after the HOLY GHOST did deſcend upon them, they ſhould be inſtructed in. So that if we can find out what thoſe truths were, which the diſciples were fully inſtructed in after the coming of the HOLY GHOST, which either were not at all, or not ſo clearly revealed to them before, becauſe of their prejudice againſt them; we may then certainly conclude, that theſe were the things which our SAVIOUR here ſpeaks of, when he ſays, "I have many things to ſay unto you, but "you cannot bear them now."

And upon inquiry into this matter by theſe two marks, it will appear that they were principally theſe three.

1. That our SAVIOUR did not deſign the ſetting up of any temporal kingdom in this world; but that his kingdom and government was to be ſpiritual, not managed by any external force or compulſion, or by laws, the violation whereof he would vindicate by the temporal ſword; but by laws, the ſanction and penalty whereof ſhould take hold of the minds and ſpirits of men, and relate unto another world.

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And this was a truth which the diſciples were incapable of, whilſt our SAVIOUR was here upon earth; againſt which they were ſo prejudiced by the general tradition which the Jews had entertained, that the MESSIAS was to be a great temporal prince, and to ſubdue all nations to them, that they were in a continual expectation, when he would lay aſide his mean condition, and appear in that glory and majeſty which they expected; when like the ſun he would break through all thoſe clouds wherewith he was muffled and obſcured, and ſhine forth in his full ſtrength and glory. For it appears very plain, that they had an hankering expectation after ſome ſuch thing, and that after he had ſo plainly declared to them his death and ſufferings. For the text tells us, that "they could not underſtand theſe "things, but they were hid from them;" that is, they were ſo poſſeſſed with the conceit of his temporal kingdom, that they could not imagine that any ſuch thing could befal him. And to ſhew how deeply this conceit was rooted in them, immediately after CHRIST had told them ſo plainly of his ſufferings, James and John put up a petition to him, that one of them might ſit on his right hand, and the other on his left in his kingdom. This opinion of his temporal kingdom did ſo run in their minds, that they could not underſtand any thing that ſeemed to contradict it.

And though our SAVIOUR had ſo expreſly declared, but a little before his death, that "his king-"dom was not of this world," and therefore he ſhould make no reſiſtance to the violence that was offered to him, yea, though the diſciples ſaw him put to death; yet they did not lay aſide this opinion, but

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ſtill expected that he would riſe again, and then begin his kingdom in this world. For ſo we find the two diſciples diſcourſing together, as they were going to Emmaus, Luke xxiv. 21. "We truſted, "ſay they one to another, that it had been he which "ſhould have redeemed Iſrael." And after his reſurrection, this was that which lay uppermoſt in their minds, and which their thoughts were ſtill upon, as appears by that queſtion which they put to him juſt before his aſcenſion, as St. Luke tells us, Acts i. 6. "When therefore they were come together, they "aſked of him, ſaying, wilt thou at this time reſtore "the kingdom to Iſrael?" SERM. CXCIX.

No wonder then, if being poſſeſs'd with ſo ſtrong a prejudice about this matter, our SAVIOUR did not ſtrive to convince them of it, whilſt he was upon earth; becauſe they could not then have born it: but we find that after the coming of the HOLY GHOST, they were fully inſtructed in it, and quitted the conceit which they formerly entertained, and were ſatisfied that he was aſcended into heaven, and "ſet at "the right hand of the majeſty of GOD," and that from thence he had ſent his SPIRIT to inſtruct and govern his church, and that this was the kingdom of the MESSIAS.

They were ſo poſſeſs'd before with another apprehenſion, that they would almoſt have rejected him, had they underſtood that the MESSIAS was to have no other kingdom than this: but after that glorious confirmation was given to him, by his reſurrection from the dead, and viſible aſcenſion into heaven, and the deſcent of the HOLY GHOST in ſuch wonderful and miraculous gifts, then at laſt they were capable of underſtanding

SERM. CXCIX. derſtanding and receiving this truth, which could not ſink into their hearts before.

2. Another truth which our SAVIOUR here probably intended, was the abrogating the jewiſh diſpenſation. And this likewiſe they muſt needs be extremely prejudiced againſt; becauſe their law was given by GOD, and looked upon by them, not as temporary, but a perpetual inſtitution. And this truth we find that the apoſtles were afterwards inſtructed in, when the HOLY GHOST was come upon them. And therefore in the council at Jeruſalem, the apoſtles releas'd the Gentiles from the obſervance of Moſes his law, as a thing which they were perfectly inſtructed in by the HOLY GHOST. Acts xv. 28. "It hath "ſeemed good to the HOLY GHOST, and to us," &c.

3. Another truth which our SAVIOUR probably here intended, was, that the ſalvation of the MESSIAS belonged to the Gentiles, as well as to the Jews. The Jews had a ſtrong conceit of their own privileges, and look'd upon all the world, beſides themſelves, as a company of reprobates, that had no ſhare or intereſt in the promiſe of GOD, or in thoſe great bleſſings, which their MESSIAS was to bring to the world. And we find that the diſciples had ſo deeply imbib'd this prejudice in their education, that they wondered at our SAVIOUR, when they found him talking with the ſamaritan woman. And though before his aſcenſion he had given them an expreſs command "to go and teach all nations," yet it ſeems 'twas a good while before they underſtood this command in the latitude in which our SAVIOUR intended it. For 'tis plain from the hiſtory of the Acts, that till Peter was ſent to Cornelius, and

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:r inſtructed in this matter by a viſion from SERM.
en, they had not at all preach'd the goſpel to CXCIX.
Gentiles, being perſuaded that it was unlawful to
:; but by the command of our SAVIOUR
) go and teach all nations," they underſtood that
were to preach to the Jews diſperſed in all na-
:. But after this viſion to Peter, and when
ſaw that the HOLY GHOST fell upon the
tiles, in the ſame manner that it had done upon
), then and not before they were inſtructed in
truth.

hat theſe are all, or ſome of the principal of
: truths which our SAVIOUR here means, when
ays, that he had yet many things to ſay unto
liſciples, which they could not then bear, does
pe ſufficiently appear; becauſe they were ſuch
ts, as the diſciples were moſt vehemently preju-
l againſt, and which afterwards they were fully
ucted in by the deſcent of the HOLY GHOST,
not before.

. I ſhall enquire what is the meaning of this
iiſe in the text, that "the SPIRIT of truth
ill guide them into all truth."

hat theſe words are not to be underſtood in the
teſt latitude which they are capable of, I think
ane will grant. For certainly no man ever ſup-
l, that our SAVIOUR here promiſed that his
.IT ſhould lead his diſciples into the know-
: of all natural truths, and inſtruct them in all
lepths of philoſophy, and in the myſteries of
:ts and ſciences. Plain it is then, that ſome li-
tion muſt be put upon this general and uni-
l promiſe of "leading them into all truth."
the difficulty is, how far it is to be limited,
and

SERM. and what bounds are to be ſet to this general pro-
CXCIX. miſe?

Now in all reaſon it ought to be limited by the context; and if we go that way, which is the only reaſonable way of limiting general words, then the plain meaning of this promiſe will be this; that becauſe our SAVIOUR had forborn to reveal ſeveral truths to his diſciples, which they were not then capable of, he would ſupply this difficulty afterwards by his HOLY SPIRIT, who after that he was riſen from the dead, and aſcended into heaven, ſhould deſcend upon them, and inſtruct them fully in thoſe truths, which he, in condeſcenſion to their prejudice and incapacity, had in his life time forborn to do; that is, he would take a fitter ſeaſon to inſtruct them fully by his SPIRIT, in all thoſe truths, which, whilſt he was upon earth, they were not ſo capable of receiving. "I have yet many things to ſay unto "you;" that is, beſides what I have already declared to you, there are ſeveral other things, which ye are not now ſo capable of receiving, which the HOLY GHOST, whom I will ſend in my name, ſhall take a more convenient time to inſtruct you in.

And our SAVIOUR ſpeaks much to the ſame purpoſe, John xiv. 25, 26. "Theſe things have I "ſpoken unto you, being yet preſent with you: but "the comforter, which is the HOLY GHOST, "whom the FATHER will ſend in my name, he "will teach you all things;" that is, he ſhall make up and ſupply what is wanting, and inſtruct you in thoſe things which ye are not now ſo capable of receiving.

I ſhall now, in the ſecond place, make ſome inferences from the words thus explained. As,

Firſt,

Firſt, that it is not neceſſary at all times to preach all truths, which are of importance to be * known. For theſe were great truths which our SAVIOUR forbore for ſome time to reveal to his diſciples, and were of great importance to the planting and propagating of the goſpel; and yet he thought it better at preſent to forbear the preſſing of them, than by an unſeaſonable declaration of them to do no good, but only ſtir up prejudice againſt himſelf, and thoſe other neceſſary truths which he had inſtructed them in.

Secondly, that there ought to be due regard to what the people can bear; and where men are poſſeſs'd with a violent prejudice againſt ſome truths, we ought, in imitation of our SAVIOUR's example, patiently to expect and endeavour the removal of that prejudice; and firſt to apply all fitting means for the conquering and ſubduing it, before we expoſe truth to be rejected by thoſe who have taken up a violent prejudice againſt it. And this rule holds univerſally, where we have to deal with perſons who are tractable and willing to learn, but do at preſent lie under ſome prejudice of education, or ſome falſe principles which they entertained unawares, which by time and patience, and a gradual progreſs of truth, may be removed, but are not to be conquer'd and born down at once. There are ſome prejudices which cannot be pluck'd out of the minds of men at once, but yet may be ſo looſened by degrees, that they will fall off of themſelves; as there are many knots unty'd with patience and leiſure, which by a violent pulling are fix'd ſo much the faſter.

* Utile eſt ut taceatur aliquod verum, propter incapaces. Aug. perſever. l. ii. c. 16.

And

SERM. CXCIX.

And this courſe we find the apoſtles took, in imitation of our SAVIOUR, 1 Cor. iii. 2. "I have "fed you," ſaith St. Paul there, "with milk, and "not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to "bear it." He was contented to inſtil truth into them by degrees, and as they were capable of it. The minds of moſt men are ſtrait and narrow, and cannot receive that at once, which may be inſtilled by degrees; like narrow-mouthed veſſels, into which liquor may be poured by degrees; but if we ſtrive to put it in faſter than they can receive it, it runs by, and is loſt.

But where men are not of a teachable diſpoſition, but the prejudice againſt truth is wilful and affected, there we are bound to propoſe great and important truths to men, notwithſtanding their prejudice againſt them, and to urge upon them thoſe things which are neceſſary and fit for them to know, "whether they will hear, or whether they will for-"bear." And if in that caſe they will reſiſt truth fairly and with full evidence propoſed to them, they do it at their peril. GOD is not obliged to do more, than to offer men ſufficient means of conviction; and if they will be obſtinate and pertinacious, GOD is not bound in that caſe to provide any farther remedy.

III. Another inference, and which I principally intended from this text, is this, that from the explication which I have given of this promiſe of our SAVIOUR's, of ſending his SPIRIT to lead his diſciples into all truth, it very plainly appears, that there is no ground or colour of ground from this text, for the pretended infallibility of the romiſh church: and yet this is one of thoſe texts, which

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ir great maſters of controverſy do urge us withal, the proof of their infallibility; a ſign that they much at a loſs for good arguments to prove ıy, otherwiſe they would never ſummon a text ſo y remote from their purpoſe. And how far this t is from proving their church to be infallible, l very clearly appear, if we conſider theſe five ngs.

ı. That the plain and obvious ſenſe of this pro-e (as I have already ſhewn) is this; that becauſe re were ſome truths fit for the apoſtles to know, ich they were not at that time capable of receiv-, whilſt our SAVIOUR was upon earth, there-e after his aſcenſion, he would ſend his HOLY IRIT to inſtruct them in thoſe things, and to de them into all thoſe truths, which it was not n ſeaſonable to acquaint them withal. Now by at art can any man infer from hence, that our VIOUR would give the infallible aſſiſtance of his LY SPIRIT to the church of Rome, to the end the world?

ı. Let it alſo be conſider'd, that this promiſe was de perſonally to the apoſtles, and therefore ought to be extended beyond them, unleſs it evidently ear, that it ought to be ſo extended; unleſs it evi-tly appear, either from the tenour of the pro-e, or from ſome other reaſon, that it was the in-tion of the promiſer, that this ſhould equally ex-d to others as well as to them. 'Tis true, that s promiſe was made to the apoſtles, not merely; their own ſakes, but for the benefit of the church; GOD thereby promiſeth, that his SPIRIT ſhould eal thoſe truths to them, that they might declare m to the church: but it does not from hence follow,

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follow, that any other perſons, in ſucceeding ages of the church, ſhould have the ſame immediate aſſiſtance of the HOLY GHOST which the apoſtles had; becauſe, being once revealed to the church, there was no need of a new revelation of thoſe truths in every age.

3. There is nothing in the tenour of this promiſe, nor any other reaſon, from whence it may appear, that this promiſe ought to be extended any farther, than to the perſons to whom it was made; becauſe this promiſe was made with a peculiar reſpect to the apoſtles, and their employment, and for reaſons proper to the firſt ſtate of the church; and not common to all ages; therefore it cannot with reaſon be extended to all after ages of the church.

Let it be granted then, that this promiſe taken together with other promiſes of our SAVIOUR made to the apoſtles, does ſignify an infallible aſſiſtance to them, ſo as to ſecure them from error, in the delivery of the doctrine of CHRIST; yet why ſhould any church afterwards, much leſs the church of Rome apart from all others, pretend to be heir-general to the apoſtles in this infallible aſſiſtance? The apoſtles gave ſufficient evidence of their infallibility, by the miracles which they wrought: and let the pope and general councils give this teſtimony of their infallibility, and we are ready to acknowledge it. There was reaſon why this aſſiſtance ſhould be afforded to the apoſtles in the firſt preaching of the goſpel; but after it was planted, and the doctrine of chriſtianity conſign'd to writing, there was no need of ſuch an infallible aſſiſtance afterwards.

But they of the church of Rome tell us, that this infallible aſſiſtance was neceſſary afterwards for the perpetuity

perpetuity of the church, and for the government of it, and for the deciſion of controverſies amongſt chriſtians. To this I anſwer two things: SERM. CXCIX.

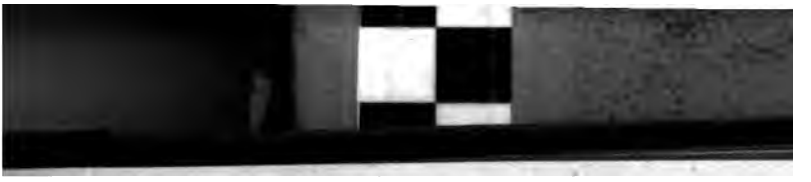
Firſt, if this infallible aſſiſtance be neceſſary to theſe ends, then it is alſo neceſſary, that it ſhould have been declared, what that church or ſociety is, which was to be ſo infallible; elſe how would men know, whither to have recourſe for the government of the church, and the deciſion of controverſies in matters of difficulty? as good the chriſtian church be without infallibility, as that no man ſhould know where it is.

And will any man have the confidence to ſay, that GOD hath any where in ſcripture declared, that the church of Rome hath this infallibility annexed to her? hath the ſcripture any where told us, that the church of Rome is the catholick church, that is, that a particular church is the church univerſal? if we ſhould ſuppoſe the univerſal church to be infallible in matters of faith and practice, is it any where ſaid in the bible, that the pope, or a general council, or both together are infallible? are we any where there directed to have recourſe to Rome, and the biſhop of that city, either with or without a general council, for the determination of controverſies in religion? and yet if infallibility be neceſſary for the ends mentioned, then certainly 'tis as neceſſary, that we ſhould have been plainly directed where to find it, that we may make uſe of it upon occaſion. What man living can perſuade himſelf, that the belief of the infallibility of the Romiſh church, that is, of the pope, or of the pope and council, ſhould be ſo fundamental an article of faith as they would make it; and yet that neither CHRIST nor his apoſtles

SERM. CXCIX.

ſhould ſay one word about it? How comes it to paſs, that when there were ſo many ſchiſms and diſſenſions in the primitive church, St. Paul ſhould never ſo much as once mention this effectual remedy of all thoſe evils to ſend them to St. Peter, who was the only infallible judge of controverſies? If CHRIST had appointed this way, then certainly St. Paul could not have been ignorant of it. Beſides that it would have been an excellent direction to the church in after-ages, what to have done in the like caſes; if our SAVIOUR or any of his apoſtles would have given us the leaſt ſignification, that the heir of infallibility had been fix'd at Rome, and that thither we were to have recourſe for the deciding of all differences in religion.

Eſpecially it muſt needs ſeem very wonderful, that St. Paul in his epiſtle to the Roman church, ſhould not acquaint them what a ſingular privilege that church had above all other churches, that it was the ſeat of infallibility, and that the biſhop of that church was the great judge of controverſies, and that there could no difference ariſe among them, about any matter of faith, but they might ſpeedily have it decided from that chair. Nay, on the contrary, there are ſhrewd intimations given, that the church of Rome herſelf ſhould apoſtatize from the faith, and that her haughtineſs would be her ruin. Rom. xi. 20, 21. where ſpeaking of the Jews, that were "broken "off by their unbelief," he gives this caution to the church of Rome; "well: becauſe of unbelief they "were broken off, and thou ſtandeſt by faith. Be "not high-minded, but fear. For if GOD ſpared "not the natural branches; take heed leſt he alſo "ſpare not thee. Be not high-minded, but fear." What needed they to fear, who had the privilege of





infallibility? their faith muſt needs be unſhaken. But St. Paul ſeems to think that church to be in as much danger of falling from the faith, as any other. From whence we may certainly conclude, that he knew nothing of its infallibility. Nay he ſeems to have foreſeen their arrogant pretence to it, and that that very thing would be the occaſion of their falling, when he gives them that caution, "be not high-minded, "but fear." For what greater inſtance could there poſſibly be of a proud and high mind, than to aſſume to themſelves to be infallible? But, SERM. CXCIX.

Secondly, the ends mentioned may be ſufficiently attained without infallibility. As for the perpetuity of the church, that may continue to the end of the world, by virtue of the infallibility of CHRIST'S promiſe, though there be no infallibility either in the church of Rome, or any where elſe. For ſetting aſide CHRIST'S promiſe, the church may fail; and his promiſe ſignifies only that it ſhall not fail, not that it cannot. All that can be inferred from the promiſe of CHRIST, concerning the perpetuity of the church, is only the certainty of the event, but not the infallibility of the cauſe; not that the church ſhall be infallible, but only that it ſhall not fail.

In like manner for the government of the church, and deciſion of controverſies, there is no need of infallibility; becauſe the church may be governed well enough, as other ſocieties are, without an infallibility: and all controverſies that are neceſſary to be decided, may be decided by the infallible rule of faith, "the "holy ſcriptures," which are plain in all things neceſſary; and there is no neceſſity, that controverſies about matters not neceſſary ſhould be decided.

To conclude this point; if the pope and a gener council be the ſeat of infallibility, (which is the mo general opinion in the church of Rome) then ho was the chriſtian church govern'd, and controverſi decided, before the council of Nice, which was t firſt general council; that is, for three hundred years And if the church did well enough for three hundr years without an infallible judge, this is a demonſtr tion that there is no abſolute need of it.

4. This promiſe here in the text ſignifies a revela tion of ſome new truths to the apoſtles, which the were not inſtructed in before, and therefore cannc belong to any church in after-ages. For the churc of Rome herſelf does not pretend to any revelatio of objects of faith not known before, and therefor can challenge nothing by virtue of this promiſe.

5. Suppoſe infallible aſſiſtance were here promiſe to the church in all ages, and that the church c Rome were the catholick church, and that the pop and a council were the Roman church, and conſe quently the catholick, I ſay, ſuppoſe all this granted yet the church of Rome, according to her princi ples, can never be certain that this is the meaning c this promiſe. For they profeſs to receive both th ſcripture and the interpretation of it from the church and conſequently to believe this text to be ſcripture and this to be the meaning of this text, becauſe thei church which is infallible tells them ſo: and if ſo then they do not believe their church to be infallible becauſe this text ſays ſo; but they believe this to b the meaning of this text, becauſe their church is in fallible and tells them ſo. So that of neceſſity the muſt firſt believe their church to be infallible, befor they can prove it from this or any other text; an

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conſequently, they muſt either prove things in a circle, or elſe take the meaning of this text of the infallibility of their church for granted, without any proof. And thus much may ſuffice to have ſpoken to this text.

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# SERMON CC.

## Of the ordinary influence of the HOLY GHOST, on the minds of chriſtians.

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JOHN vii. 39.

*But this ſpake he of the* SPIRIT, *which they that believe on him ſhould receive. For the* HOLY GHOST *was not yet given, becauſe that* JESUS *was not yet glorified.*

OUR bleſſed SAVIOUR (who uſed from all ſorts of objects and occurrences to diſcourſe of heavenly and ſpiritual things) being preſent at the feaſt of tabernacles, in which it was the cuſtom of the Jews, from the fountain Siloam, to fetch water with great pomp and ceremony, and to bring it into the temple with ſound of trumpet, and to offer it, ſinging thoſe words of the prophet Iſaiah, "they ſhall draw waters with joy out of the wells of "ſalvation:" I ſay, our SAVIOUR being preſent at this feaſt, takes occaſion from theſe waters, which they brought into the temple with ſo much joy, to proclaim thoſe ſpiritual benefits which chriſtians ſhould be made partakers of by the HOLY GHOST,

SERM. CC. and which are in ſcripture repreſented by "waters "flowing from a living fountain. In the laſt day, "the great day of the feaſt, JESUS ſtood and cried, "ſaying, if any man thirſt, let him come unto me "and drink. He that believeth on me, as the ſcrip- "ture ſaith," that is, according to the tenour of ſeveral paſſages in the prophets, "out of his belly ſhall "flow rivers of living water;" and then the evangeliſt adds, by way of farther explication of our SAVIOUR's meaning, "but this he ſpake of the SPI- "RIT, which they that believe on him ſhould re- "ceive. For the HOLY GHOST was not yet "given, becauſe JESUS was not yet glorified." In which words we have theſe three things conſiderable.

Firſt, the gift itſelf; which is here called "the "SPIRIT, or the HOLY GHOST."

Secondly, the perſons upon whom this gift was to be conferred; and thoſe are believers, ſuch as ſhould believe and embrace the goſpel. "This he ſpake of "the SPIRIT, which they that believe on him "ſhould receive."

Thirdly, the particular time and ſeaſon of the firſt conferring of this gift: and this was not to be till after our SAVIOUR's aſcenſion into heaven, and being received up into glory, implied in thoſe words, "the "HOLY GHOST was not yet given, becauſe JE- "SUS was not yet glorified." I ſhall as briefly as I can explain theſe three things.

Firſt, the gift itſelf, which is here called "the "SPIRIT, or the HOLY GHOST." By which we are to underſtand a ſpecial power and preſence of the HOLY GHOST with believers, the immediate operation and aſſiſtance of the DIVINE SPIRIT communicated

municated and imparted to them; and this comprehends in it theſe two things. SERM. CC.

1. Thoſe extraordinary and miraculous gifts which were beſtowed upon the apoſtles and primitive chriſtians, in order to the planting and propagating of the chriſtian religion in the world, and for the uſe and benefit of the church, while it was under perſecution, and deſtitute of all ſecular countenance and aſſiſtance, and of thoſe ordinary humane advantages which are ſufficient to preſerve and maintain a religion, after it is once firmly ſettled, and generally entertained. And theſe gifts were in a very remarkable manner, and ſuch as no religion that ever was in the world can pretend to the like, conferred upon the firſt preachers of the chriſtian doctrine, and planters of it in the world; and they were in a high degree neceſſary to give credit and countenance to this religion at its firſt appearance, and to awaken the drowſy world to an attentive conſideration of it, to conquer the prejudices of men againſt a new religion, and to ſupport and bear up the teachers and publiſhers of this doctrine, againſt that violent oppoſition and perſecution which would certainly be raiſed againſt it, and likewiſe to ſupply the want of ſecular power and authority to give countenance and aſſiſtance to it.

For theſe and ſuch like ends and reaſons, GOD was pleaſed at that time not only to endue the apoſtles and firſt preachers of chriſtianity with all ſorts of miraculous powers, but even the generality of chriſtians with ſeveral extraordinary gifts; and alſo to accompany the outward preaching of the goſpel with a very extraordinary influence of GOD'S SPIRIT upon the minds of men; to make way for the entertainment of it, by opening their underſtandings, and enlight-

SERM. CC.

ning their minds to diſcern ſpiritual things, by ſubduing their prejudices, and conquering their luſts, and the vicious and perverſe inclinations of their wills, to the obedience of faith, by raiſing their minds above the world, above all the allurements and enjoyments of it, and above all the threatnings and terrors of it, and giving men courage and reſolution to embrace this profeſſion, and with conſtancy to adhere to it, notwithſtanding all the dangers and ſufferings which attend it.

I ſhall not now treat of theſe miraculous gifts particularly, having had frequent occaſion heretofore *to diſcourſe at large of the natnre, and ſeveral kinds, and particular uſe and ends of them. I ſhall only obſerve to you, that this power of miracles, and this extraordinary influencc of the SPIRIT of GOD upon the minds of men, was not intended always to continue in the church, but only ſo long as there ſhould be need and occaſion for it, that is, 'till the chriſtian religion was fully propagated and planted, and the fury of perſecution abated, and till chriſtianity had the favour and countenance of the civil authority, and the prejudice of education on its ſide. For when by this means it came to ſtand upon equal terms of advantage with other religions, GOD then withdrew his extraordinary aſſiſtance, and left it to be maintained and ſupported by more humane and ordinary ways, and in a great meaſure by its own rational force and power upon the minds of men.

*See Vol. V. Serm. LXXIV. and this Vol. Serm. CXCVII.

II. The gift of the HOLY GHOST doth likewiſe ſignify and comprehend in it a more ordinary and gentle influence of GOD'S SPITIT upon the minds of men, to all holy and good purpoſes: by which I mean, an immediate operation and aſſiſtance of the

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HOLY GHOST afforded to men, to relieve the weakneſs and impotence of humane nature, to help and ſtrengthen us to the performance of what the goſpel requires of us. And this I ſhall have occaſion to explain more particularly, when I have gone over the other parts of the text.

Secondly, you have here the qualification of the perſons who were to be made partakers of this gift, and that is "believing" and embracing the goſpel. "This he ſpake of the SPIRIT, which they that "believe on him ſhould receive."

The extraordinary and miraculous gifts of the SPIRIT were not conferred on any, but thoſe who embraced the faith of CHRIST, and made profeſſion of the chriſtian religion. Not that all chriſtians were endowed with thoſe extraordinary gifts, much leſs all in an equal degree. But they were diſtributed, as St. Paul tells us, in ſuch manner and meaſure as the wiſdom of GOD thought fit, and as was moſt for the uſe and edification of the church. But all were partakers of the HOLY GHOST in reſpect of his more ordinary influence and aſſiſtance, and this gift all chriſtians receiv'd upon their embracing and owning the chriſtian religion. Thus Acts v. 32. "The "HOLY GHOST is ſaid to be given by GOD to "them that obey him." And Gal. iii. 14. we are ſaid "to receive the promiſe of the SPIRIT through faith." And Epheſ. i. 13. "In whom alſo after that "ye believed, ye were ſealed with that HOLY "SPIRIT of promiſe."

And becauſe this profeſſion of faith was made in baptiſm, whereby men are ſolemnly initiated into the chriſtian religion, hence it is, that this gift of the HOLY GHOST is in ſcripture promiſed, and ſaid to be

SERM. CC. be conferred in baptiſm, Acts ii. 38. "Then Peter "ſaid unto them, repent and be baptized every one "of you in the name of JESUS CHRIST, for the "remiſſion of ſins, and ye ſhall receive the gift of "the HOLY GHOST." And Heb. vi. 4. the apoſtle ſpeaking of thoſe who had ſolemnly taken upon them the profeſſion of chriſtianity, thus deſcribes them, "thoſe who were once enlightned," that is, "baptized;" (for ſo baptiſm is frequently by the ancients call'd illumination) "thoſe who were once bap-"tized, and have taſted of the heavenly gift, and "were made partakers of the HOLY GHOST;" implying that this heavenly gift of GOD's HOLY SPIRIT, was conferr'd upon chriſtians in their baptiſm; and hence it is, that "baptizing with water "and the HOLY GHOST" were frequently put together, water being the outward ſymbol, and the HOLY GHOST the inward grace, conferr'd in baptiſm. So likewiſe the apoſtle joins together, "the "laver of regeneration, and the renewing of the HOLY GHOST," Tit. iii. 5.

All which conſider'd, I cannot imagine why ſo great a ſcruple ſhould be made of thoſe expreſſions which our church uſeth in the office of baptiſm of children; "being regenerated and born again by "baptiſm, and being thereby made the children of "GOD, and heirs of eternal life." That is, by entring into this covenant, they are put into a ſtate and capacity of all the bleſſings of the goſpel, if they do not neglect the condition which that covenant requires on their part. For all this is in truth no other but what the ſcripture ſays of baptiſm, and aſcribes to it, when it calls it, "the laver of regeneration," when it declares the SPIRIT to be conferred in baptiſm, and

and when it ſays, that "as many as are led by the SERM. "SPIRIT of GOD, are the ſons of GOD, and that CC. "the ſons of GOD, are heirs of eternal life." So that I cannot ſee that our church, in her higheſt expreſſions concerning the benefits and effects of baptiſm, ſays any thing but what is very agreeable, both to the expreſſions and ſenſe of ſcripture. And thus not only the ancient fathers ſpake of this matter, but ſo likewiſe do all the liturgies of the reformed churches, in the offices and forms appointed by them for the adminiſtration of baptiſm; ſo that it ſeems a very affected ſingularity to take exceptions at ſuch expreſſions as have conſtantly been, and ſtill are generally uſed in all chriſtian churches. The

Third thing conſiderable in the text is, the particular time and ſeaſon of the conferring of this gift of the HOLY GHOST; and that was after our SAVIOUR's aſcenſion into heaven, and being received up into glory, implied in thoſe words, "the HOLY "GHOST was not yet given, becauſe JESUS "was not yet glorified;" ſignifying to us, that this effuſion of the SPIRIT was not to be till after our SAVIOUR's aſcenſion into heaven.

But was not the HOLY GHOST given to the prophets of old? and were not good men in former ages of the world under the ordinary influence and aſſiſtance of the divine grace and SPIRIT? why is it then ſaid that "the HOLY GHOST was not yet "given?"

The anſwer to this is eaſy, that our SAVIOUR here ſpeaks of that general and plentiful effuſion of the HOLY GHOST which was promiſed to "the "latter days," that is, to the "goſpel age;" the like to which, both for the univerſal communication of

SERM. CC. of this gift, and for the extraordinary degree and measure of its participation, had never been in the world before; and of this it is, that the evangelist speaks, when he dates the time of it, from after our SAVIOUR's ascension into heaven. Now why the dispensation of this gift of the HOLY GHOST was particularly limited to this time, though it is not necessary we should know the reason of it, yet there are three obvious ones, which may give us full satisfaction in this matter.

1. Because it was not so necessary before in our SAVIOUR's life-time. For during his continuance in the world, and conversation with his disciples, his presence supplied all other defects; but when he left them, they were, as he calls them, "orphans," destitute of help, comfort, and protection; and therefore it was requisite, that upon his departure from them, this comforter and advocate should "come to "abide and continue with them for ever." But this does not seem to reach fully the reason assigned in the text, why "the SPIRIT was not yet given, be- "cause JESUS was not yet glorified." Therefore,

2. It seems very convenient, not only that our SAVIOUR should be visibly taken up into heaven, but that after he was ascended thither, he should give some remarkable testimony to the world, of the power and dignity to which he was there advanced; and that as a king he should give some evidence of his authority and majesty, at his solemn inauguration into his kingdom, by dispensing plentifully spiritual gifts, as the princes of this world are wont at such a time to scatter temporal favours and benefits. And this the scripture takes notice of, as an evidence and testimony of his royal dignity, and glorious exalta-

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tion at the right hand of GOD, Acts v. 31, 32. "Him hath GOD exalted (ſpeaking of our bleſſed "LORD) with his own right hand, to be a prince "and a SAVIOUR, to give repentance unto Iſrael, "and forgiveneſs of ſins. And we are his witneſſes "of theſe things; and ſo alſo is the HOLY GHOST, "whom GOD hath given to them that obey him." Where you ſee that "the gift of the HOLY "GHOST" is mention'd as a teſtimony of our SAVIOUR's being "exalted as a prince at the right "hand of GOD." But more expreſly St. Paul, Eph. iv. 8. applies to our SAVIOUR theſe words of the pſalmiſt, "wherefore he ſaith, when he aſ-"cended up on high, he led captivity captive, "and gave gifts unto men."

3. After our SAVIOUR's aſcenſion, there was the greateſt occaſion that ever was for the beſtowing of this gift of the HOLY GHOST, conſidering what kind of perſons they were, that were appointed to publiſh the goſpel to the world; and that this great work being to be carried on by inſtruments in all appearance ſo weak, and mean, and contemptible, there was an abſolute neceſſity of an extraordinary teſtimony to be given from heaven to the divinity of this new doctrine, and of a divine power and preſence going along with it, to encourage and ſupport thoſe weak inſtruments in carrying on of this work, againſt the mighty oppoſition and perſecution it was likely to meet withal, and againſt ſuch difficulties and obſtacles as were plainly inſuperable by any humane power and means. For as there never was a work of greater conſequence and difficulty than this undertaking; ſo could this divine power and aſſiſtance never have appeared and manifeſted itſelf, upon a fitter

SERM. CC. fitter and more worthy occaſion. Since our SAVIOUR, according to the wiſe counſel of GOD, intended, that after his aſcenſion into heaven, his goſpel ſhould be publiſhed to the world, it was highly requiſite that the minds of men ſhould be prepared for it, and way made for the more ready entertainment and eaſy paſſage of it, by ſome ſignal teſtimony of the divine preſence attending the firſt publiſhers of it, and by circumſtances, though not ſo full of terror and amazement, as thoſe who did accompany the giving of the law, yet really of greater force and efficacy, and more apt to convince the world of the truth of this doctrine, and to inſinuate it more effectually into the hearts and conſciencies of men.

And now that I have given you a brief account of the three particulars, which from this text offer themſelves to our conſideration, I ſhall return back to that which I intended more eſpecially to inſiſt upon, and that is, the more ordinary influence of the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD upon the minds of thoſe who believe and embrace the chriſtian doctrine; and this I ſhall endeavour to explain to you under theſe four heads.

Firſt, I ſhall open to you the nature of it.

Secondly, the neceſſity of it, to enable us to perform the condition of the goſpel-covenant.

Thirdly, the bleſſed effects of it.

Fourthly, the extent of it, as to perſons and times.

Firſt, I ſhall endeavour to open to you the nature of this gift of the HOLY GHOST, underſtanding by it the ordinary influence of the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD upon the hearts and minds of believers. And I doubt not but that the ſcripture means by it an immediate influence and operation of the HOLY SPIRIT

RIT of GOD upon the minds of men, an inward power, ſtrength and aſſiſtance communicated to chriſtians, to all the purpoſes of holineſs and obedience, enabling them to be ſuch "manner of perſons in all "holy converſation and godlineſs" as the goſpel requires: and not only that this ſtrength and aſſiſtance is offered and afforded to us, "to work in us, both "to will and to do" all that is neceſſary to ſalvation, if we put no obſtacle thereto, and do not reſiſt the SPIRIT of GOD, and the bleſſed motions of it; but likewiſe that this power does continually dwell and reſide in all true chriſtians, if we do not grieve the SPIRIT of GOD, and provoke him to withdraw himſelf from us. SERM. CC.

And this is ſufficiently declared in ſeveral places of the new teſtament, where we are ſaid to be "aſſiſted "by a divine power, and ſtrengthen'd with all might "by the SPIRIT in the inner man; to walk in the "SPIRIT, to be led by the SPIRIT, and by the "SPIRIT to mortify the deeds of the fleſh;" and likewiſe in thoſe texts, wherein "the SPIRIT of "GOD is ſaid to work mightily in them that believe, "to dwell in them, to ſanctify and renew them," with many ſuch like expreſſions, frequently to be met with in the writings of the apoſtles. By all which, unleſs we offer notorious violence to the plain and obvious ſenſe of them, we muſt neceſſarily underſtand ſomething more than the confirmation which was given to the chriſtian doctrine, by the miracles that were wrought by the power of the HOLY GHOST; which doctrine being thus confirmed, does by way of rational conviction work upon the minds of men, and change their wills, without any internal operation and immediate aſſiſtance of the HOLY GHOST.

SERM. CC. GHOST. Such a remote influence of the SPIRIT of GOD upon men as this is, does by no means ſeem to anſwer the fulneſs of thoſe phraſes and expreſſions, which the ſcripture ſo frequently uſeth concerning it; and if any man do but ſeriouſly weigh and conſider them, nothing leſs than an immediate influence of the SPIRIT of GOD upon our hearts, and a real ſtrength and power thereby communicated to us, can be imagined to ſatisfy the proper ſenſe and meaning of the ſeveral expreſſions which I have mentioned.

And that the ſcripture, by the promiſe of the SPIRIT, and the various expreſſions concerning it, does mean this ordinary aſſiſtance common to all chriſtians in all times, and only the extraordinary and miraculous gifts of the HOLY GHOST, which were peculiar to the firſt ages of chriſtianity, ſeems to me to be very plain; becauſe the ſcripture makes the gift of the SPIRIT to be common to all believers, and to be given to all that are baptized, and this in all ages of the church; as appears from thoſe words of St. Peter, Acts ii. 38, 39. "Then Peter "ſaid unto them, repent and be baptized every "one of you in the name of JESUS CHRIST, "for the remiſſion of ſins, and ye ſhall receive the "gift of the HOLY GHOST. For the promiſe is "unto you, and to your children, and to all that "are afar off, even as many as the LORD our "GOD ſhall call." This promiſe is "the promiſe "of the HOLY GHOST," which he ſays is made to them and their poſterity, that in all ſucceeding ages ſhould be gained to the faith of CHRIST. So that this "promiſe of the HOLY GHOST," which St. Peter ſpeaks of, and declares to be conferr'd in baptiſm, does not reſpect only the firſt ages of

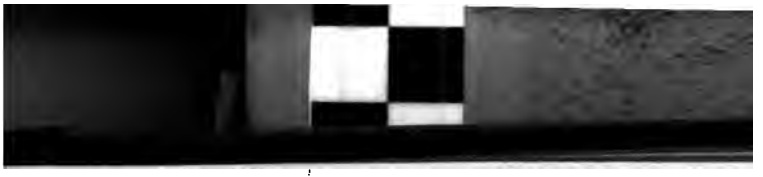
of chriſtianity, but all ſucceeding generations; and therefore cannot be underſtood of the power of miracles, becauſe that is long ſince ceaſed in the chriſtian church.

And this appears yet more evidently, in that the ſcripture makes the want of the SPIRIT a ſign that a man is no true and ſincere chriſtian: "if "any man have not the SPIRIT of CHRIST, "he is none of his;" and on the contrary, makes our having the SPIRIT of GOD, a mark of a child of GOD; "as many as are led by the SPI-"RIT of GOD are the ſons of GOD:" but our SAVIOUR hath aſſured us, that men may have the miraculous gifts of the SPIRIT of GOD, "may "propheſy in CHRIST's name, and caſt out devils "in his name, and in his name do many wondrous "works," and yet be "workers of iniquity, and ſhut "out of the kingdom of GOD." And on the other hand, men may not have theſe miraculous gifts, and yet be "the children of GOD." But this will yet more fully appear, if we conſider in the

Second place, the great neceſſity of ſuch an immediate influence and aſſiſtance of the SPIRIT of GOD, to enable chriſtians to perform the condition of the covenant of the goſpel. The great corruption and degeneracy of humane nature, and the impotency and weakneſs conſequent thereupon, is not only matter of divine revelation, but hath always been the general apprehenſion and acknowledgement, and the ſad complaint of the wiſeſt part of mankind; and indeed, every man may feel it in himſelf, and obſerve it in others. Now for our relief and recovery out of this miſerable and degenerate ſtate, GOD was pleaſed in great pity and commiſeration to mankind, to ſend

SERM. CC. his SON into the world, to reveal his will and our duty a-new to us, for our direction in the way to life and happineſs; and by the ſacrifice of himſelf to make a perfect expiation of ſin; and to proclaim forgiveneſs of ſins to us, for the encouragement of our repentance, and return to our duty; and, in a word, to offer new terms of life and happineſs to us, upon the conditions of faith, and repentance, and new obedience.

But after all this is done for us, we are ſtill without ſtrength, our nature being depraved, and ſunk into that impotency and weakneſs, that without the powerful aſſiſtance of divine grace, we are utterly unable to perform thoſe moſt equal and reaſonable conditions which the goſpel requires of us, being, as the ſcripture expreſſeth it, "dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, "and eſtranged from the life of GOD, through the "darkneſs that is in us, and the blindneſs of our "hearts;" being enſlaved to vicious habits, and having "a carnal mind, which is enmity to GOD," and renders us incapable to receive or reliſh divine and ſpiritual things. So that notwithſtanding all that our bleſſed SAVIOUR hath done and ſuffered for us, and all the merciful overtures of pardon and happineſs, which the goſpel makes to us, all this will ſignify nothing to our benefit and advantage, unleſs our impotency be relieved, and new life and ſtrength be conveyed to us, to awaken and excite us to that which is good, to enable us to mortify and ſubdue our evil and corrupt inclinations, to break off our vicious habits, and to walk in the ways of GOD's commandments. For "we are not ſufficient of ourſelves, "as of ourſelves," for any of theſe things; "but "our ſufficiency is of GOD." "Without CHRIST





we can do nothing;" and it is only "through him ſtrengthening of us, that we are able to do all thoſe things" which are neceſſary to be done by us, in order to the obtaining of that happineſs and ſalvation which the goſpel hath promiſed, and our SAVIOUR hath purchaſed for us. And therefore our merciful REDEEMER, that he might not have his work imperfect, hath ſent his bleſſed SPIRIT into our hearts, "to enlighten the eyes of our minds," and to open and diſpoſe our underſtandings for the receiving of divine and ſpiritual truths; to conquer likewiſe the perverſeneſs and ſtubbornneſs of our wills, and to ſet us at liberty from the ſlavery of our luſts; (for "where the SPIRIT of GOD is, as St. Paul tells us, there is liberty;") "to renew our natures, and to purify our hearts, to mortify our corrupt affections, and to aſſiſt us to every good word and work;" to ſtrengthen us againſt temptations, to ſupport us under ſufferings and perſecutions, and in a word, "to keep us by this mighty power of GOD," and gracious aſſiſtance of his HOLY SPIRIT, "through faith unto ſalvation." SERM. CC.

So that whoſoever ſhall but duly weigh and conſider his own darkneſs and ignorance, the ſtrange and unreaſonable prejudices of a corrupt mind againſt divine truth, and againſt the practice of holineſs and virtue, the ſtrong bias of mens natural inclinations to that which is evil, the mighty force and power of evil and inveterate habits within us, and the ſtrength and violence of manifold temptations without us, together with the great difficulties and diſcouragements of piety and virtue, eſpecially when they are attended with grievous ſufferings, and fiery trials, for righteouſneſs

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neſs ſake; I ſay, he that conſiders all this, will eaſily diſcern, and readily acknowledge, how great a neceſſity there is of the grace and aſſiſtance of GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT, to all the purpoſes of a firm faith, and a ſincere repentance, and a conſtant and univerſal obedience to the holy laws and precepts of the goſpel, to reſcue us from the power and dominion of ſin, to raiſe us to a new life, to engage us in an holy courſe, and to fortify our reſolutions againſt ſin, and to enable us to perſevere, and patiently continue in doing and ſuffering the will of GOD.

'Tis this gracious influence, and continual aſſiſtance of GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT reſiding and dwelling in us, which ſecures all the other bleſſings and benefits of the goſpel to us, and conducts us ſafely thro' all the temptations of this world, and the difficulties of a chriſtian courſe, to "the end of our faith, the "eternal ſalvation of our ſouls." For which reaſon, the SPIRIT of GOD dwelling in good men, and evidencing itſelf by its genuine fruits and effects, the graces and virtues of a good life, is ſaid to be "the "pledge and earneſt of our future inheritance," and of a bleſſed reſurrection to eternal life, and "to ſeal "us up to the day of redemption," Rom. viii. 11. "But if the SPIRIT of him that raiſed up JESUS "from the dead dwell in you; he that raiſed up "CHRIST from the dead, ſhall alſo quicken your "mortal bodies, by his SPIRIT that dwelleth in "you." For the ſame reaſon the apoſtle makes the SPIRIT of GOD, by which chriſtians are governed and led, to be the mark of their "adoption," and being "the children of GOD, and heirs of eternal "life." Ver. 14. "For as many as are led by the "SPIRIT of GOD, are the ſons of GOD." And

ver.

ver. 16, 17. "The SPIRIT itſelf beareth witneſs 'with our ſpirit, that we are the children of GOD. 'And if children, then heirs, heirs of GOD, and 'joint heirs with CHRIST." And elſewhere the poſtle uſeth it for an argument, why we ſhould be areful not to reſiſt, or quench the motions of GOD's leſſed SPIRIT; becauſe by this mark "we are 'ſealed" to eternal life. "And quench not the 'HOLY SPIRIT of GOD, whereby ye are ſealed 'unto the day of redemption." I ſhould now have roceeded in the

Third place, to ſhew the bleſſed effects of the influence of the HOLY SPIRIT dwelling and reſiding in us: but that, together with the extent of his gift of the HOLY GHOST, as to perſons and imes, I ſhall refer to another opportunity.

# SERMON CCI.

## Of the ordinary influence of the HOLY GHOST, on the minds of chriſtians.

JOHN vii. 39.

*But this ſpake he of the* SPIRIT, *which they that believe on him ſhould receive. For the* HOLY GHOST *was not yet given, becauſe that* JESUS *was not yet glorified.*

IN my former diſcourſe from theſe words, I obſerved that the gift of "the SPIRIT, or 'the HOLY GHOST," comprehends under it wo things. SERM CCI. The ſecond ſermon on this te

First,

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First, those extraordinary and miraculous gifts, which were bestowed upon the apostles and primitive christians, in order to the planting and propagating of the christian religion in the world; together with that extraordinary influence of GOD'S SPIRIT upon the minds of believers, which accompanied the first preaching of the gospel.

Secondly, the more ordinary and gentle influence of the SPIRIT of GOD, upon the minds of all those who believe and embrace the gospel.

The latter of these I proposed to speak to more particularly and fully, and that under these four heads;

First, to open the nature of this influence.

Secondly, to shew the necessity of it, to enable us to perform the condition of the gospel-covenant.

Thirdly, to consider the blessed effects of it.

Fourthly, to consider the extent of it, as to persons and times.

The two first of these I have spoken to, and now proceed to what remains, viz.

Thirdly, to consider the blessed effects of this gift of the HOLY GHOST. And they are many and great.

I shall enumerate them as briefly as I can, not intending to insist long upon them. And in general, all the good that is in us, and proceeds from us, all good thoughts and inclinations, all good purposes and resolutions, all good works and actions are in scripture every where ascribed to the dictates and motions, to the influence and assistance of the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD. It is "he that works in us, "both to will and to do of his own mere good-"ness?" All our strength and sufficiency is from him.

him. To his bleſſed inſpirations and aids we owe all good inclinations, our beginning, and our progreſs, and our perſeverance in virtue and goodneſs. And though the SPIRIT be ſaid to be given to them that do already believe, that is, ſo as to dwell and reſide, to take up his conſtant habitation and abode only in thoſe who have already ſincerely embraced the chriſtian faith; yet this doth not exclude a preventing influence and operation of GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT upon the minds of thoſe to whom the goſpel is offered, diſpoſing them to embrace and entertain it, and by this means working faith in them. And in this ſenſe it is, that faith in ſcripture is ſaid to be "the gift of GOD," becauſe it is firſt wrought in them by the influence and operation of that bleſſed SPIRIT, which is promiſed to dwell and reſide in them after they have believed, and ſincerely embraced the chriſtian religion. SERM. CCI.

More particularly theſe bleſſed fruits and effects are conſtantly in ſcripture attributed to the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD.

1. Our ſanctification. We are ſaid "to be renewed by the HOLY GHOST, and by the "SPIRIT to mortify the deeds of the fleſh." That great change which is wrought in man, which in ſcripture is called by the ſeveral names of "regeneration, and a new birth, of the new creature, and "the new man," is conſtantly aſcribed to the SPIRIT of GOD as the author of it.

2. The conduct of our whole chriſtian courſe, and all the actions of it, and our conſtancy and perſeverance in it, are likewiſe aſcribed to the ſame bleſſed cauſe. We are ſaid "to be led by the SPIRIT, "and to walk in the SPIRIT;" that is, to be

guided and assisted in all that we do, by this blessed principle, which does as it were act and animate all good men; and we are said "to be kept by the mighty "power of GOD," that is, by the powerful operation of GOD's HOLY SPIRIT, "through faith "unto salvation."

3. All particular graces and virtues are likewise said to be "the fruit of the SPIRIT," Gal. v. 22. "The fruit of the SPIRIT is love, joy, peace, "long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, (or ra-"ther fidelity) meekness, temperance." And Ephes. v. 9. "The fruit of the SPIRIT is in all goodness, "and righteousness, and truth." And charity, which is the sum almost of all other graces and virtues, is said to be planted and wrought in us by the SPIRIT, 1 Pet. i. 22. "Seeing ye have purified "your souls in obeying the truth, through the SPI-"RIT, unto charity, or unfeigned love of the bre-"thren."

4. By the same SPIRIT we are said to be made partakers of that great and glorious privilege of "adoption," and are advanced to that high honour and dignity of being "called the sons of "GOD," Rom. viii. 14. "As many as are led by "the SPIRIT of GOD, are the sons of GOD," and consequently heirs of a blessed resurrection to eternal life. For the apostle reasons, ver. 16. 17. "The SPIRIT itself beareth witness with our spi-"rit," that is, is a testimony within us, "that we "are the children of GOD. And if children, then "heirs, heirs of GOD, and joint heirs with CHRIST; "if so be that suffer with him, that we may be also "glorified together." So that the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD, which is conferr'd upon all sincere christians,

chriſtians, and does reſide in them, is a "mark or ſeal of their being the children of GOD," and a pledge or earneſt of the bleſſed inheritance" of eternal life, as the ſcripture very plainly and frequently declares, 2 Cor. i. 21, 22. "Now he which eſtabliſheth us with you in CHRIST, and hath anointed us, is GOD; who hath alſo ſealed us," or ſet his ſignature to mark upon us; and what this is, he explains in the next words; "and hath given us the earneſt or pledge of the SPIRIT in our hearts." Epheſ. i. 13, 14. "In whom alſo after that ye believed, ye were ſealed with that HOLY SPIRIT of promiſe; which is the earneſt of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchaſed poſſeſſion." And chap. iv. 30. "And grieve not the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD, whereby ye are ſealed unto the day of redemption."

5. By this SPIRIT we have free acceſs to GOD in prayer, in confidence that we ſhall have our petitions granted, Epheſ. ii. 18. "For through him," that is through JESUS CHRIST, "we both have an acceſs by one SPIRIT unto the FATHER." By the ſame SPIRIT likewiſe we are aſſiſted in our prayers to GOD, and direct what to aſk of him. So St. Paul tells us, Rom. viii. 26. that "we do not know what to pray for as we ought; but the SPIRIT helpeth our infirmities, and intercedeth for us;" that is, ſuggeſts to us ſuch petitions and requeſts as are fit for us to put up to GOD.

6. By the ſame SPIRIT "joy and peace in believing," and from the teſtimony of a good conſcience, "great conſolation and good hope through grace," are frequently inſtill'd into us, and "ſhed "abroad

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" abroad in our hearts." Hence are thoſe expreſſions ſo frequent in ſcripture, of " the conſolations " of the SPIRIT, of peace and joy in the HOLY " GHOST," which, as it is the natural fruit of righteouſneſs, ſo it is likewiſe produced and increaſed in us, by the ſecret operation and influence of GOD's HOLY SPIRIT.

7. And laſtly, by the ſame SPIRIT chriſtians are ſupported and born up, cheared and comforted in all their troubles and afflictions, and that in a very extraordinary and ſupernatural manner, when they fall under great tribulations and ſufferings for righteouſneſs ſake. And this influence and aſſiſtance of the divine SPIRIT, was very viſible and remarkable among the primitive chriſtians, who were ſo terribly expoſed to the moſt fierce and cruel perſecutions; and may proportionably be expected in all caſes of extraordinary ſuffering for the teſtimony of GOD's truth.

And though this influence and aſſiſtance, this conduct and guidance of the divine SPIRIT, be commonly very gentle and ſecret, and do uſually work upon us in ſo imperceptible a manner, that it is very hard, if not impoſſible, particularly to diſtinguiſh beteween the motions of GOD's SPIRIT, and thoſe of our own minds, between the immediate ſuggeſtions of the HOLY GHOST, and the dictates of our own reaſon; yet we are in general ſufficiently aſſured of it, partly from the effects themſelves, but principally from the expreſs promiſe and declarations from ſcripture, that chriſtians are acted by a ſupernatural principle, and ſecretly aſſiſted by the influence of a ſpirit above our own: and therefore we have reaſon, as the ſcripture conſtantly does,

does, to aſcribe all the good that is in us, or that is done by us, to this gracious aſſiſtance and powerful influence of the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD upon our minds, and thankfully to acknowledge that "in us, that is, in our fleſh," in our carnal minds conſidered as deſtitute of the SPIRIT of GOD, "there dwells nothing that is good;" and that "by "the grace of GOD we are what we are," and are enabled to do all the good we do, "through "CHRIST ſtrengthning of us by his SPIRIT "in the inner man." I proceed to the



Fourth and laſt thing I propoſed to conſider, viz. the extent of this gift of the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD, as to perſons and times. And in ſhort, this gift is beſtowed upon every particular chriſtian, every ſincere believer; for "we receive the promiſe of "the SPIRIT by faith:" and, "if any man, "ſays the apoſtle, Rom. viii. 9. have not the SPI-"RIT of CHRIST, he is none of his;" that is, he does not belong to him, he is no true chriſtian. And 1 Cor. iii. 16. "Know ye not," ſays the ſame apoſtle, ſpeaking of all chriſtians in general, "know ye not that ye are the temple of "GOD, and that the SPIRIT of GOD dwelleth in "you?"

And that this gift extends to all perſons, in all times and ages of the church, to all that ſincerely embrace the chriſtian profeſſion, and are admitted into it by baptiſm, is plain from that diſcourſe of St. Peter, which I had occaſion to mention before, Acts ii. 38. "Repent and be baptized every one of "you, in the name of JESUS CHRIST, for the "remiſſion of ſins, and ye ſhall receive the gift of "the HOLY GHOST." And that this was not a favour

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favour and privilege peculiar to the firſt ages of chriſtianity, but common to all ſucceeding times, is evident from what follows, ver. 39. "but the promiſe," that is, the great promiſe of the HOLY GHOST, "is unto you, and to your children, and to all that "are afar off, even as many as the LORD our GOD "ſhall call." That is, this promiſe of the SPIRIT extends to all thoſe who ſhall hereafter embrace the chriſtian profeſſion.

And in this ſenſe, our SAVIOUR makes good that promiſe which he made to his apoſtles, "to be with "them always in the work of making diſciples, and "baptizing them, to the end of the world;" that is, he would accompany the labours of the paſtors and teachers of his church in all ages, with ſuch a preſence and influence of his SPIRIT upon thoſe that were taught and baptized, as ſhould be ſuitable to the occaſions and neceſſities of the church, both the paſtors and the members of it, "unto the end of the "world." In a word, this gift of GOD's HOLY SPIRIT is beſtowed upon all thoſe who by baptiſm are admitted into CHRIST's religion, and if it be cheriſh'd and complied with, and the bleſſed motions of it be not reſiſted and quenched by us, it will abide and continue with us, and produce thoſe bleſſed fruits and effects which I have before mentioned.

Having thus explain'd the ſeveral particulars contain'd in the text, all that now remains, is to make ſome uſeful inferences from the whole; and they ſhall be theſe following, and I ſhall be very brief in them.

I. What an encouragement is here to our duty, that we have ſuch a mighty aid and aſſiſtance promiſed

miſed and afforded to us in the goſpel? So that the apoſtle doth with great reaſon exhort, 2 Cor. vii. 1. "Having therefore theſe promiſes, dearly beloved, "let us cleanſe ourſelves from all filthineſs of the fleſh "and ſpirit, perfecting holineſs in the fear of GOD." And we are utterly inexcuſable, if we do not make uſe of that grace which is promiſed, and ready to be afforded to us to this end; it is our own fault if ſin ſtill "have dominion over us, and reign in our mor-"tal bodies, that we ſhould obey it in the luſts of it." SERM. CCI.

II. What great cauſe have we thankfully to acknowledge the wonderful goodneſs of GOD to us, in beſtowing ſuch an invaluable gift upon us, as this of the HOLY SPIRIT, by whoſe grace and aſſiſtance alone we are made partakers of all the other bleſſings and benefits of the goſpel? Had we been ſtill left without ſtrength, that great ſalvation which CHRIST hath purchaſed for us, and which the goſpel offers, would have ſignified nothing to us, for want of power to have performed the conditions which the goſpel requires of all that hope for eternal life and ſalvation.

III. Let us always be ready to comply with the motions and ſuggeſtions of the bleſſed SPIRIT, and ſincerely make uſe of thoſe aids and aſſiſtances which he is always ready to afford to us; and let us take great heed, that we do not by any diſobedience of ours to his bleſſed motions, or by any wilful preſumptuous ſins, "reſiſt, and quench, and grieve "this HOLY SPIRIT of GOD, whereby we are "ſealed unto the day of redemption."

If the SPIRIT of GOD vouchſafe to dwell in us, and to make his abode in our ſinful ſouls and bodies; let us do nothing that is unworthy of ſo divine and heavenly a gueſt; let his preſence with us fill our hearts

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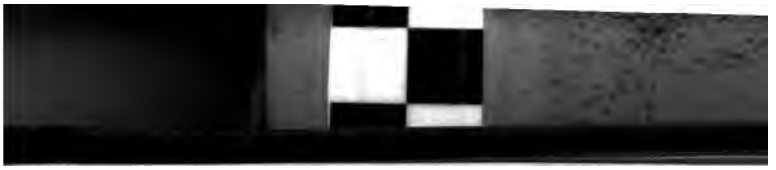
hearts with a continual awe and reverence of him, and engage us effectually "to cleanſe ourſelves from "all filthineſs of the fleſh and ſpirit;" let nothing be acted by us, or proceed from us, which may defile this temple of the HOLY GHOST. "Ye are the "temple of the living GOD," ſays St. Paul, 2 Cor. vi. 16. And in the firſt of the Corinthians, iii. 16, 17. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of GOD, "and that the SPIRIT of GOD dwelleth in you? "If any man defile the temple of GOD, him ſhall "GOD deſtroy: for the temple of GOD is holy, "which temple ye are." More particularly the apoſtle uſeth it as an argument to flee from fornication, becauſe our bodies alſo are "the temples of the "HOLY GHOST," 1 Cor. vi. 18, 19. "Flee forni-"cation: for every ſin that a man doth," that is, other ſins which men commit, "are without the bo-"dy; but he that committeth fornication, ſinneth "againſt his own body;" that is, pollutes and defiles it. And then it follows, "what, know ye not "that your body is the temple of the HOLY "GHOST which is in you, which ye have of GOD, "and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with "a price: therefore glorify GOD in your body, and "in your ſpirit, which are GOD's."

IV. Let us earneſtly beg of GOD his HOLY SPIRIT, and continually depend upon him for his grace and aſſiſtance, in an humble ſenſe of our own impotency and weakneſs, of the frailty and treachery of our own ſpirits, of the fickleneſs and inconſtancy of our beſt purpoſes and reſolutions, always remembring that ſaying of our SAVIOUR's, John xv. 5. "Without me ye can do nothing." And that of St. Paul, Epheſ. ii. 8. "For by grace are ye ſaved "through







" through faith: and that not of yourſelves: it is the " gift of GOD." And that of St. Peter, 1 Pet. i. 5. ſpeaking in general of all true chriſtians, " who, ſays " he, are kept by the power of GOD through faith " unto ſalvation." This " power of GOD is the " SPIRIT which they that believe receive," and by the bleſſed guidance and influence whereof they are " kept unto ſalvation."

V. This ſhews us what an advantage we have by the chriſtian religion, which makes us partakers of the HOLY GHOST, whereby is afforded to us all neceſſary direction and aſſiſtance, and comfort in our chriſtian courſe. Our SAVIOUR tells his diſciples, that the preſence and influence of this comforter and advocate, whom " he would ſend to abide with them " for ever," would be more to them, than even his own perſonal preſence among them, which ſurely we ſhould look upon as an unſpeakable privilege and happineſs; and yet the inward preſence of the divine SPIRIT is more for our ſecurity and comfort, than the beſt teacher and example; becauſe it is inward, and conveys a real ſtrength to us; and it is univerſal, diffuſing itſelf at once into the hearts and minds of all good men, and is always preſent to them, which CHRIST's perſonal and viſible preſence was not, nor could be; ſo that to all purpoſes of direction and aſſiſtance, of ſecurity and comfort, we are in a better condition under the continual influence and conduct of GOD's HOLY SPIRIT, than they who had the advantage and happineſs of converſing perſonally with our SAVIOUR, here upon earth. And therefore he tells his diſciples, that it was really for their benefit and advantage, that he ſhould leave the world, to make way for the coming of this comforter and advocate,

SERM. CCI. advocate, John xvi. 7. "Nevertheleſs I tell you the "truth; it is expedient for you that I go away. For "if I go not away, the comforter will not come un- "to you: but if I depart, I will ſend him unto you." So that they were gainers by their loſs, and his departure from them upon theſe terms was really to their advantage.

VI. This ſhews the great fault of the contempt and neglect of the ſacrament of baptiſm, which was inſtituted by our SAVIOUR as the ſolemn rite and ceremony of admitting perſons into the chriſtian religion, and the means of making us partakers of this gift of the SPIRIT, and of all the bleſſed fruits and effects of it; ſo that this ſacrament cannot be neglected or ſlighted, without great affront to the chriſtian religion, and contempt of one of the greateſt bleſſings promiſed in the goſpel. They that were admitted to the ſolemn profeſſion of chriſtianity by baptiſm, were "made partakers of the HOLY "GHOST;" and this not only in the apoſtles times, but in all after-ages; for this "promiſe of the "HOLY GHOST was to them and their children, "and to all that were afar off, even to as many as "the LORD their GOD ſhould call;" that is, to all that ſhould embrace the chriſtian religion, and make a ſolemn profeſſion of it in baptiſm, in all ſucceeding ages to the end of the world.

VII. What hath been diſcourſed upon this argument, diſcovers the vanity of many mens pretenſions to the SPIRIT. Some pretend to infallibility, all pretence whereto is vain, without miracles to juſtify and make good this pretence; and yet upon this preſumption of infallibility, without any proof of it, but only that it is convenient for them to have it, which

will as well prove all others to be infallible, becauſe it is every whit as convenient for them: I ſay, upon this preſumption and pretence, they aſſume to themſelves to dictate all the world, what they ſhall believe, and to cenſure and condemn all thoſe who will not ſubmit to their dictates, as miſerably miſtaken, and out of the way of ſalvation; whereas the infallibility of the apoſtles was a ſupernatural gift, not evident of itſelf, but evidenced to the world by the miracles which were wrought, to confirm the truth of their teſtimony and doctrine; and without this evidence of infallibility, no man's, no church's pretences to it ought to be regarded, but ought to be look'd upon as fanatical enthuſiaſm: beſides, the prodigious uncharitableneſs of this ſpirit, is as directly contrary as can be to the firſt and chief "fruit of the SPIRIT" mentioned by the apoſtle, which is love or charity. SERM. CCI.

Others pretend to be guided by the SPIRIT in all their actions, and to be governed in an extraordinary manner by particular impulſes and impreſſions from the SPIRIT of GOD; which they likewiſe pretend they can certainly diſcern from the motions of their own minds and imaginations. But as they can give no reaſon for this, ſo we have ſeen many times in experience, that men have been led into unlawful and wicked practices, and have done weak and unreaſonable and ridiculous things, and then have blaſphemouſly charged them upon the SPIRIT of GOD; a preſumption of a high nature, and which hath ſome reſemblance to the ſin againſt the HOLY GHOST, and ſeems to be of near affinity with it. For as the unpardonable ſin againſt the HOLY GHOST conſiſted in reſiſting the evidence of our SAVIOUR's miracles, and perverſly and maliciouſly imputing the

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operations of the SPIRIT of GOD to the power and efficacy of the devil; ſo on the other hand, to pretend the SPIRIT of GOD and his motions for the works of the devil, and any thing that is wicked; and to aſcribe theſe things, which are more likely to proceed from the inſtigation of that evil ſpirit, to the impulſe of the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD, is a high blaſphemy of the HOLY GHOST.

Others pretend, that the SPIRIT doth immediately dictate to them their prayers, which many times are very confuſed and unbeſeeming, and too plainly the iſſue of a heated imagination; whereas "GOD is "not the GOD of confuſion, but of order," And what is merely the effect of an acquired habit, or natural fluency and facility of expreſſion and warm affections, they confidently aſcribe to the SPIRIT of GOD; whereas the SPIRIT of GOD is more frequently and certainly in "the ſtill voice, than in the "high wind and fire," the boiſterous paſſions, and fiery zeal of men. And certainly he that takes care to put up wiſe and decent petitions to GOD, and conſiders carefully what to beg of him, and aſks it in a becoming manner, with faith and true fervency of affection, though in a form, hath much more reaſon to conclude that he prays in and by the SPIRIT of GOD, than he that hath the greateſt freedom of extempore effuſions.

And after all, there is a much better and clearer demonſtration, that a man hath the SPIRIT of GOD, than any of theſe pretences, and that is from the undoubted "fruits of the SPIRIT," in the graces and virtues of a good life, which are viſible and manifeſt in the temper and converſation of a good man; and without theſe, all pretences to the

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SPIRIT of GOD, are but fancy and vain delu- SERM. CCI.
ſions; ſuch men "deceive themſelves, and the truth "is not in them."

VIII. and laſtly, from hence it appears how happy it is for us, that we are not left in our own hands, and to our own weakneſs and impotency, and "to "work out our own ſalvation," but that we are under the continual conduct, and powerful protection of ſuch a guardian, and that the HOLY SPIRIT is always ready to be afforded to us, to all the purpoſes of guidance and aſſiſtance, of comfort and ſupport, of ſanctification and obedience, of patient continuance and perſeverance in well-doing. "Let us therefore, "as the apoſtle exhorts, work out our ſalvation with "fear and trembling, becauſe it is GOD that worketh "in us, both to will and to do." We are not left to ourſelves to carry on this great work, for then it would certainly miſcarry; but GOD works in us, both the will and inclination to that which is good, and gives us the power to do it: he does not force our wills but incline them by the gentle ſuggeſtions and motions of his bleſſed SPIRIT; with which, if we comply, we are happy; if we reſiſt them, and rebel againſt them, "we receive the grace of GOD "in vain," and "our ruin and deſtruction is of "ourſelves."

But can we then do nothing? no, not without the preventing and aſſiſting grace of GOD; but that being afforded to us, we may comply with the motions of GOD's bleſſed SPIRIT; we may co-operate and concur with his aſſiſtance. GOD aſſiſts, but we do; he ſanctifies and renews us by the HOLY GHOST, and yet we purify and cleanſe ourſelves.

But is not this injurious to the grace of GOD, if we do any thing at all, and the grace of GOD do not do all in us and for us? I anſwer,

1. It is a great grace of GOD, to help our weakneſs, and to relieve our impotency, and to ſtrengthen and enable us to do what we cannot do of ourſelves. We owe our ſalvation to the grace of GOD, to the influence and aſſiſtance of his HOLY SPIRIT, if ſo be that without it we ſhould ſtill remain "dead in "treſpaſſes and ſins," and ſhould never be able to emerge and recover out of that corrupt and miſerable ſtate.

2. Grace does not deſtroy nature, nor divine aſſiſtance take away our liberty, but frees us from our bondage; and, as David expreſſeth it, "enlargeth "our hearts to run the ways of GOD's command-"ments;" for if GOD do all, and we nothing, all exhortations and perſuaſions would be in vain.

But then it ſeems that we may "receive the grace "of GOD in vain, and reſiſt the HOLY GHOST;" and our complying with it, or not reſiſting of it, is our own act; which is to make men their own SAVIOUR, and to give the caſting and determining vote to humane liberty. I anſwer,

1. The ſcripture expreſly ſays, that men may "re-"ceive the grace of GOD in vain, and reject the "counſel of GOD againſt themſelves;" and that if we rebel againſt, and diſobey the motions of GOD's SPIRIT, he will depart from us, and we forfeit his aſſiſtance.

2. All this is, ἀργὸς λόγος, mere cavil; as will appear to any one, by this plain inſtance. A rebel is convicted, and liable to the ſentence and condemnation of the law; he ſues for pardon, and obtains and accepts

accepts it: will any man now ſay, that becauſe he SERM
aſks and accepts it from the king, and the king does CCI.
not take his hand and open it, and violently thruſt the pardon into it, that this man ſaves himſelf, and takes away the glory of the king's grace and mercy, and that he owes his life to himſelf, and not to the king's bounty and goodneſs? A man would be thought very ſenſeleſs, that ſhould ſo aſcribe this man's deliverance from death to any act of his own, as not to think it wholly owing to the king's grace and favour. I think the caſe is the very ſame, concerning mens complying with that grace which GOD affords them for their "repentance unto life." I would fain know of theſe ſubtle objectors, whether Moſes, when he ſays, Deut. xxx. 19. "I have ſet before you life and death; bleſ-"ſing and curſing; therefore chooſe life;" does not, in ſo ſaying, plainly ſuppoſe, that men may chooſe life or refuſe it? and if ſo, whether he intended to make men their own ſaviour?

But this objection is preſs'd yet a little farther; that if this be ſo, then Judas had as much cauſe to thank GOD as Peter had. And who ever denied, or can deny, that a rebel who refuſeth a pardon offer'd to him by his prince, hath the ſame real obligation of gratitude to his prince, with him that accepts it? The prince offers the ſame favour to both, and the obligation is equal; and though he that accepts it doth not ſave himſelf, yet he that refuſeth it deſtroys himſelf. And at the judgment of the great day, all impenitent ſinners under the goſpel, ſhall be forced to acknowledge the grace of GOD to them, in affording the opportunity of ſalvation, and ſhall only blame and condemn themſelves for neglecting that happy opportunity. But if an irreſiſtible degree of grace be

neceſſary to every man's ſalvation, it is plain, that impenitent ſinners never had the opportunity of ſalvation, and conſequently cannot condemn themſelves for the neglect of it.

I have been the longer upon this, that I might root out of the minds of men an inveterate falſe perſuaſion, concerning the manner of the operation of GOD's grace in the converſion of ſinners. And thus much may ſuffice to have been ſpoken concerning the operation of GOD's SPIRIT upon men, in order to their converſion and making of them good: but after men are converted, and do ſincerely "repent and "believe the goſpel," they have the SPIRIT of GOD in another manner; he "dwells and reſides in "believers," as a conſtant and ſettled principle of holineſs and obedience, as I have already ſhewn.

# SERMON CCII.

## The fruits of the SPIRIT, the ſame with moral virtues.

EPHES. v. 9.

*For the fruit of the* SPIRIT *is in all goodneſs, and righteouſneſs, and truth.*

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I Have formerly, upon occaſion of this feſtival ſolemnity *, diſcourſed on divers ſorts of arguments relating to the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD. As concerning the † miraculous powers and gifts of the HOLY GHOST conferr'd upon the apoſtles

* Preach'd on Whitſunday. 1690.

† See ſerm. cxcvii.

apoſtles in a viſible manner, when they were aſſembled together upon this day of pentecoſt, to qualify and enable them for the more ſpeedy and effectual planting and propagating of the chriſtian religion in the world, which is the argument more peculiarly proper to this day.

I have likewiſe ‖ diſcourſed to you concerning the ſanctifying power and virtue of the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD, which is common to all chriſtians, and to all ages of the chriſtian church: as alſo concerning the bleſſed fruit and effect of GOD's HOLY SPIRIT conferred upon chriſtians in baptiſm, and which does continually dwell and reſide in all thoſe who do ſincerely perform, and make good their baptiſmal vow, to aſſiſt and enable them to all the purpoſes of holineſs and obedience, and to work and increaſe in us all thoſe graces and virtues which are here in the text, ſaid to be the fruit of the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD. "For the fruit of the SPIRIT is in all goodneſs, and "righteouſneſs, and truth." The connexion of which words, with the apoſtles foregoing diſcourſe, is briefly this. At the 17th verſe of the former chapter, the apoſtle gives a ſolemn charge to the chriſtians at Epheſus, who were newly converted from heatheniſm to chriſtianity, to be careful that their converſation be anſwerable to that holy religion which they now made profeſſion of, and that as they had quitted the religion and rites of paganiſm, ſo likewiſe that they would abandon the vices and evil practices of it; that the world might ſee that they had made as great a change in their minds and manners, as their religion. "This I ſay therefore, and teſtify in the LORD, "that ye henceforth walk not as other gentiles walk, "in the vanity of their mind, having the underſtand-

‖ See ſerm. cc. and cci.

" ing darken'd, being alienated from the life of " GOD, through the ignorance that is in them, be- " cauſe of the blindneſs of their heart: who having " loſt the ſenſe of good and evil, have given them- " ſelves over to all filthineſs and brutiſh luſts." And then at the 20th verſe he tells them, that the chriſtian religion requires another ſort of converſation: " but " ye have not ſo learned CHRIST: if ſo be that ye " have heard him, and have been taught by him, as " the truth is in JESUS: that ye put off, concern- " ing the former converſation, the old man, which " is corrupt according to the deceitful luſts; and be " renewed in the ſpirit of your mind: and that ye " put on the new man, which after GOD is created " in righteouſneſs and true holineſs; or, the holi- " neſs of truth."

And then he cautions them againſt ſeveral ſorts of vices which they had formerly lived in, and recommends the contrary virtues to their practice; and as an argument thereto, he puts them again in mind of the change which they had made at the 8th verſe of this chapter, " for ye were ſometimes darkneſs, but now " are ye light in the LORD." The condition they were in whilſt they were heathens, he calls " dark- " neſs;" by which metaphor he repreſents that diſmal ſtate of ignorance and wickedneſs in which they formerly were; " but now are ye light in the LORD:" being admitted into the chriſtian religion by baptiſm, they were enlighten'd by the SPIRIT of GOD. For ſo the apoſtle to the Hebrews deſcribes baptiſm by " illumination, and being made partakers of the " HOLY GHOST," Heb. vi. 4. " They that were " once enlighten'd, and have taſted of the heavenly " gift;" which he explains in the next words, by

being

being "made partakers of the HOLY GHOST," SERM. CCII.
becauſe that is conferred in baptiſm.

"But now are ye light in the LORD; walk there-"fore as children of the light;" that is, do nothing unbecoming that ſtate, into which by the ſolemn profeſſion of chriſtianity in baptiſm ye are entered; or as it follows a little after the text, "have no fellow-"ſhip with the unfruitful works of darkneſs; walk "as children of the light," as becomes thoſe who "are enlightened and ſanctified by the HOLY SPI-"RIT of GOD," whereof ye were "made par-"takers in baptiſm: for the fruit of the SPIRIT "is in all goodneſs, and righteouſneſs, and truth."

"For the fruit of the SPIRIT." Some copies have it, ὁ γὰρ καρπὸς τοῦ φωτός, "for the fruit "of light," that is of the illumination of the HOLY GHOST, which chriſtians are made partakers of in baptiſm, "is in all goodneſs, and righteouſneſs, and "truth," which will make no difference in the ſenſe.

I ſhall briefly explain the importance of theſe three words; "goodneſs, and righteouſneſs, and truth;" and then proceed to make ſome obſervations from the text.

I. "Goodneſs." And what that is, the apoſtle takes it for granted that every body knows; he does not go about to define or explain it, but appeals to every man's mind and conſcience, to tell him what it is. It is not any thing that is diſputed and controverted among men, which ſome call good, and others evil; but that which mankind is agreed in, and which is univerſally approved by the light of nature, by heathens, as well as chriſtians; it is that which is ſubſtantially good, and that which is unqueſtionably ſo. It is not a zeal for indifferent things, about the ritual

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ritual and ceremonial part of religion, the external circumſtances of it, much nicety, and ſcrupulouſneſs about things of no moment and conſideration, ſuch as was the Phariſees "tithing of mint, aniſe, and cummin;" diſputes about "meats and drinks, and the "obſervation of days," and the like; but a purſuit of "the weightier things of the law," a care of the great duties of religion, and thoſe things wherein "the kingdom of GOD conſiſts;" the practice of the great virtues of converſation, which are apt to recommend us to the general approbation of men, to gain their good-will, and to take off exaſperations, and to calm and ſweeten the ſpirits and tempers of men towards us. And they muſt likewiſe be things unqueſtionably good, and againſt which there is no exception, ſuch as will juſtify and bear themſelves out in the general opinion of mankind.

I know very well that "goodneſs," in the ſtrict notion of it, does ſignify a ready inclination of mind to benefit and help others all that we can, as we have opportunity. And this is the particular virtue of alms-giving, or as we commonly call it, charity; which is ſo often recommended to us under the notion of "doing good." Gal. vi. 10. "As we "have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto "all men." And 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18. "Charge them "that are rich in this world, that they be not high-"minded, nor truſt in uncertain riches, but in the "living GOD, who giveth us richly all things to en-"joy; that they do good, that they be rich in "good works, ready to diſtribute, willing to com-"municate."

But there is a larger notion of "goodneſs" more frequently uſed in the new teſtament, which compre-

nds and takes in all thoſe virtues of converſation, SERM. hich are univerſally and by the light of nature owned CCII. be ſuch, and the practice whereof is apt to recom-end us to the love and eſteem of all men; as on e contrary, the neglect of them is apt to bring reli-on under a great ſcandal and cenſure: ſuch are obe-ence to our ſuperiors and governors, and a conſcious re to diſcharge all thoſe duties which the ſeveral re-tions wherein we ſtand to others, do call for from us.

Obedience to governors is recommended to us der the notion of "goodneſs, or well-doing." Pet. ii, 13, 14, 15. "Submit yourſelves to every ordinance of man for the LORD's ſake, whether it be to the king as ſupreme, or unto governors, as unto them that are ſent by him, for the puniſh-ment of evil-doers, and for the praiſe of them that do well. For ſo is the will of GOD, that with well-doing ye may put to ſilence the ignorance of fooliſh men." So likewiſe praying for thoſe at are in authority, 1 Tim. i. 1, 2, 3. "I exhort therefore, that firſt of all ſupplications, prayers, in-terceſſions, and giving of thanks be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authori-ty, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godlineſs and honeſty. For this is good and acceptable in the ſight of GOD our SAVIOUR."

In like manner, a conſcientious diſcharge of the uties which other relations require is recommended ) us under the notion of "goodneſs," and that which a ſpecial grace and ornament to religion, 1 Tim. v. "Let them learn firſt to ſhew piety at home, and to requite their parents, for that is good and ac-ceptable before GOD." And Tit. ii. 9, 10. the oſtle exhorts ſervants to be "obedient to their "maſters;"

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" maſters;" that by this inſtance of goodneſs, as well as others, they may bring credit and reputation to religon; " exhort ſervants to be obedient unto their " own maſters, and to pleaſe them well in all things: " not anſwering again; not purloining; but ſhewing " all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine " of GOD our SAVIOUR in all things."

More particularly, the ſeveral virtues of converſation are frequently inſtanced in, as branches of goodneſs, as unity, peaceableneſs, courteſy, compaſſion, and good-will towards all men. The practice of theſe things the apoſtle calls " the following of that which " is good," Rom. xii. 9, 10, &c. " Let love be " without diſſimulation: abhor that which is evil, " cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned " one towards another. Bleſs them which perſecute " you: bleſs, and curſe not. Rejoice with them that " do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Be " of the ſame mind one towards another. Mind not " high things, but condeſcend to men of low eſtate. " Be not wiſe in your own conceits. Recompenſe " to no man evil for evil. Provide things honeſt " in the ſight of all men. If it be poſſible, as much " as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dear- " ly beloved, avenge not yourſelves, but rather give " place unto wrath. Be not overcome of evil; but " overcome evil with good." So likewiſe the apoſtle, 1 Theſſ. v. 15. inſtanceth in abſtaining from revenge, as an eminent piece of goodneſs. " See that " none render evil for evil unto any man: but ever " follow that which is good, both among yourſelves, " and to all men." And St. Peter alſo gives much the ſame inſtances of goodneſs that St. Paul hath done, 1 Pet. iii. 8, 9, &c. " Finally, be ye all of one mind,

" having

" having compaſſion one of another; love as bre- SERM.
" thren: be pitiful, be courteous; not rendering CCII.
" evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrari-
" wiſe bleſſing; knowing that ye are thereunto
" called, that ye ſhould inherit a bleſſing. For
" he that will love life, and ſee good days, let him
" refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they
" ſpeak no guile: let him eſchew evil, and do good;
" let him ſeek peace, and enſue it. And who is he
" that will harm you, if ye be followers of that
" which is good?" that is, if ye practiſe goodneſs in the inſtances I have mentioned.

You ſee then what "goodneſs" is, by the inſtances which the ſcripture gives of it; obedience to our ſuperiors and governors, and a conſcientious care of the duties of our ſeveral relations, ſincere love and charity, compaſſion, humility, peace and unity, abſtaining from wrath and revenge, and rendering good for evil; theſe are unqueſtionable inſtances of goodneſs, and paſs for current among all mankind, are on all hands agreed to be good, and have an univerſal approbation among all parties and profeſſions, how wide ſoever their differences may be in other matters.

Theſe are the things which are in ſcripture more peculiarly called good, becauſe they are ſo in themſelves and in their own nature; and not merely becauſe they are commanded, as the rites and ceremonies of the jewiſh religion were, which are therefore called by GOD himſelf, in the prophet, " ſta-
" tutes that were not good," Ezek. xx. 25. " Where-
" fore I gave them ſtatutes that were not good," that is, I gave them laws concerning ſeveral things, which had no intrinſical goodneſs in them. But moral

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moral duties, becauſe of the eſſential and eternal goodneſs of them, are eminently called "good;" as in that known paſſage of the prophet, Micah vi. 8. "He hath ſhewed thee, O man, what is good; "and what doth the LORD require of thee, but "to do juſtly, and to love mercy, and to walk "humbly with thy GOD?"

The other two fruits of the SPIRIT which are added in the text, "righteouſneſs and truth," which reſpect likewiſe our converſation with men, more eſpecially in the way of commerce, or rather parts or branches of "goodneſs," than really diſtinct from it; but they are two conſiderable virtues, and therefore the apoſtle thought fit to inſtance particularly in them, after he had mentioned "goodneſs," which is indeed the general name that comprehends all virtues in it.

"The fruit of the SPIRIT is righteouſneſs," which ſignifies juſtice in our dealings and actions with others; "and truth," which is juſtice in our words; for he that ſpeaks as he thinks, and performs and makes good what he promiſeth, is ſaid to be juſt to his word. And all theſe, "goodneſs, and righte-"ouſneſs, and truth," and whatever particular virtues are comprehended under them, though they be truly and properly "moral virtues," yet are ſaid to be fruits of the SPIRIT."

From the words thus explained, I ſhall make theſe four obſervations, which I ſhall ſpeak as briefly to as I can.

Firſt, that "the fruits of the SPIRIT" are plain and ſenſible effects, appearing in the diſpoſitions and lives of men.

Secondly,

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Secondly, that theſe "fruits of the SPIRIT," here mentioned, are of an eternal and immutable nature, and of perpetual and indiſpenſable obligation.

Thirdly, that moral virtues are "the graces and "fruits of the SPIRIT."

Fourthly, that therefore they are by no means to be ſlighted, as low and mean attainments in religion; but are to be looked upon and eſteemed as a main and ſubſtantial part of chriſtianity.

Firſt, that "the fruits of the SPIRIT," are real and ſenſible effects, appearing in the diſpoſitions and lives of men. The apoſtle here ſpeaks of what is viſible in the lives and converſations of men; for he exhorts chriſtians to "walk as children of the "light;" now "walking" is a metaphor, which ſignifies the outward converſation and actions of men. "Walk as children of the light. For the "fruit of the SPIRIT is in all goodneſs, and "righteouſneſs, and truth;" that is, if a man be endued with the SPIRIT, it will diſcover itſelf by theſe viſible fruits and effects. What the apoſtle ſays of "the works of the fleſh," Galat. v. 19. "The works of the fleſh are manifeſt," plainly to be ſeen in the lives and converſations of men, is equally true of "the fruits of the SPIRIT," that "they alſo are viſible and manifeſt;" ſo that by theſe, men may make a judgment of their condition, whether they be true chriſtians, and "the SPIRIT "of GOD dwell in them," or not, viz. by the temper and diſpoſition of our minds, manifeſtly appearing in our lives and actions, by the practice of thoſe real virtues which are the proper and genuine fruits of the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD. For religion is not an inviſible thing, conſiſting in mere belief,

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lief, in height of ſpeculation, and niceties of opinion, or in abſtruſeneſs of myſtery. The ſcripture does not place it in things remote from the ſight and obſervation of men; but in real and viſible effects, ſuch as may be plainly diſcerned, and even felt in the converſation of men; not in abſtracted notions, but in ſubſtantial virtues; and in a ſenſible power and efficacy upon the lives of men, in all the inſtances of piety and virtue, of holy and excellent actions. This our SAVIOUR requires of his diſciples, that the virtue and holineſs of their lives ſhould be ſo viſible and conſpicuous, that all men may behold it, and give teſtimony to it, and glorify GOD upon that account; Mat. v. 16. "Let your light "ſo ſhine before men, that they may ſee your good "works, and glorify your FATHER which is in "heaven." Not that men ſhould make any oſtentation of religion, as the Phariſees did of their devotion and alms, which our SAVIOUR cenſures very ſeverely: but there is a great difference between an affected and vain-glorious ſhew of piety and virtue, and the real and ſubſtantial effects of them in a good life, which as they cannot, ſo they ought not to be hid; nay, on the contrary, men ought, as St. James exhorts, James iii. 13. to "ſhew out of a good "converſation, their works with meekneſs of wiſ-"dom," that is, in a wiſe manner, not with pride and oſtentation, but with meekneſs and humility, the great ornament of all chriſtian graces and virtues. I proceed to the

Second obſervation, namely, that the "fruits of "the SPIRIT," here mentioned, "goodneſs, and "righteouſneſs, and truth," are of an eternal and immutable nature, and of perpetual and indiſpenſable obligation,

obligation. The notions of good and evil, of juſt and unjuſt, of truth and fidelity, and of falſhood and perfidiouſneſs in our words and actions, I ſay theſe notions are born with us, and imprinted in our natures, are ſo fix'd and determined in the very frame of our minds and underſtandings, that as they need not be explained, ſo they can never be changed and altered. The difference of good and evil is naturally known, and the notions of "righteouſneſs, "and goodneſs, and truth," are fixed antecedently to any divine revelation, which ſuppoſeth the nature of them to be known, and therefore doth not go about to define and explain them to us; and ſuppoſeth likewiſe the obligation of them, being branches of the law of nature, and eſſential parts of that religion which is "born with us, and written upon "our hearts," and makes us "a law to ourſelves." And therefore the chriſtian religion doth only declare theſe duties more plainly, and preſs them more earneſtly upon us, and enforce the obligation of them by more powerful arguments and conſiderations, grounded upon clearer diſcoveries of the grace and mercy of GOD to mankind, and of the rewards and puniſhments of another world: but theſe duties are in their nature ſtill the ſame, and the chriſtian religion is ſo far from releaſing us from the obligation of them, that it hath very much heightened it, and bound them the faſter upon us. I paſs on to the

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Third obſervation from theſe words, namely, that "moral virtues are the graces and fruits of the "SPIRIT." For the three particulars here mentioned by the apoſtle are no other, but the chief heads and inſtances of moral duties, "goodneſs,

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" and righteouſneſs, and truth." What are theſe but moral virtues? and yet it is certain, that they are alſo chriſtian graces, becauſe they are here expreſly ſaid to be " the fruits of the SPIRIT."

And they are called moral virtues, becauſe they are ſuch duties as are not enjoined by any poſitive law, (which is not obligatory from the nature and reaſon of the thing commanded, but merely from the command;) but are of natural and eternal obligation, and ſuch as we had been bound to the obſervance of them, from the immutable goodneſs and reaſon of them, though GOD had never made any external revelation of his will concerning them. Though it cannot be denied, but that by the means of external revelation, we have a more clear and certain knowledge of them, and more powerful motives to the practice of them. So that grace and virtue are but two names that ſignify the ſame thing. Virtue ſignifies the abſolute nature and goodneſs of theſe things: grace denotes the cauſe and principle by which theſe virtues are wrought and produced, and are preſerved and increaſed in us, namely, by the free gift of GOD's HOLY SPIRIT to us; for which reaſon, theſe graces and virtues of " goodneſs, and righteouſneſs, and truth," which are here mentioned in the text, are ſaid to be " the fruits of the SPIRIT." I come now to the

Fourth and laſt obſervation from the text, namely, that ſince theſe very things which are called moral virtues, are in their nature the very ſame with " the graces and fruits of the SPIRIT," therefore they are by no means to be ſlighted, as low and mean attainments in religion, but to be looked upon and eſteemed as a main and ſubſtantial part of chriſtianity. They are called " the fruits of the SPIRIT;" that

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is the natural and genuine effect of that divine power and influence upon the hearts and lives of men, which accompanies the chriſtian religion; or the happy effects of the chriſtian religion wrought in men, by the immediate operation and aſſiſtance of the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD, which is conferred upon all chriſtians in their baptiſm, and does continually dwell and reſide in them, if by wilful ſins they do not grieve him, and drive him away, and provoke him to withdraw himſelf from them.

I do not ſay that theſe virtues are all religion, and all that is neceſſary to make a man a complete chriſtian, and good man. For there muſt be knowledge to direct us in our duty; there muſt be faith or a hearty aſſent to the revelation of the goſpel, (eſpecially concerning the forgiveneſs of our ſins, and of our juſtification and acceptance with GOD, for the ſake of the meritorious ſufferings of our bleſſed SAVIOUR,) to be the root and principle of all religious actions; there muſt be piety and devotion towards GOD, and the conſtant practice and exerciſe of religious duties in publick and private, ſuch as prayer, hearing and reading the word of GOD, frequent and reverent receiving of the holy ſacrament, which are the beſt and moſt effectual means in the world to make men good, becauſe they are appointed by GOD, and attended with his bleſſing to that end; I ſay, there muſt be all theſe, becauſe they are the principles and means of religion, which are always ſuppoſed as neceſſary to that which is the end. Now the great end of religion, that which chriſtianity mainly deſigns to work and perfect in us, are thoſe graces and virtues which are called "the fruits of the SPIRIT;" ſuch as thoſe mentioned in the text, "goodneſs, and righteouſneſs, "and truth."

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And this will be evident to any one that will attentively conſider what the ſcripture ſays of them; and more eſpecially how our SAVIOUR and his apoſtles do every where recommend them to our conſideration and practice, Micah vi. 8. "He hath ſhewed "thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the "LORD require of thee, but to do juſtly, and to "love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy GOD?" It is to theſe qualities and diſpoſitions of goodneſs, and righteouſneſs, and the like virtues, that our SAVIOUR promiſes bleſſedneſs. Theſe St. Peter calls "a divine or god-like nature," 2 Pet. i. 4, 5. ſpeaking of the knowledge of the goſpel, "Whereby, "ſays he, are given to us exceeding great and pre-"cious promiſes, that by theſe ye might be partakers "of the divine nature;" and thereupon he exhorts that chriſtians ſhould "give all diligence to make "their calling and election ſure," by adding to the faith of the goſpel, the ſeveral graces and virtues of a good life; theſe being that "divine nature" which the goſpel deſigns to make us "partakers of."

To ſpeak a little more particularly of the three virtues here mentioned, "goodneſs, righteouſneſs, and "truth." Theſe are every where frequently commended and enjoined in the new teſtament. "Goodneſs," whether we conſider it as it imports charity in general, and our love of one another, our SAVIOUR makes it the great badge and mark of a chriſtian. "Hereby, ſays he, ſhall all men know that ye are "my diſciples, if ye love one another." St. Paul calls it "the fulfilling of the law, and the end of the "commandment, τελος της παραγγελιας, the great "end and deſign of the goſpel, is charity." St. John riſeth yet higher, and ſpeaks of it as the very nature

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and eſſence of GOD himſelf, and that by which we are as it were united to him. "GOD is love, and he "that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in GOD, and GOD "in him." Or whether we conſider goodneſs under the notion of compaſſion and beneficence, a readineſs to pity and relieve and benefit others according to our ability and opportunities. This the ſcripture celebrates as a thing highly acceptable to GOD. Heb. xiii. 16. "But to do good, and to communicate, "forget not: for with ſuch ſacrifices GOD is well "pleaſed." And St. James inſtanceth it as one of the moſt ſignal teſtimonies of true piety, James i. 27. "Pure religion, and undefiled before GOD and the "FATHER is this, to viſit the fatherleſs and wi-"dows in their affliction." And chap. iii. 17. he makes it a mark and character of the divine and heavenly wiſdom; "the wiſdom which is from above, "is full of mercy and good works." SERM. CCII.

And then for "righteouſneſs," of which truth and fidelity in our intercourſe with men is a conſiderable part, St. Paul inſtanceth it in, in the firſt place, as a principal thing wherein the kingdom of GOD doth conſiſt, Rom. xiv. 17. "The kingdom of GOD doth "not conſiſt in meats and drinks," that is, the power and efficacy of the chriſtian religion, or the goſpel, (which is frequently in the new teſtament called "the "kingdom of GOD,") doth not conſiſt in zeal about indifferent things: but in the ſubſtantial virtues of a good life, "in righteouſneſs and peace."

You ſee by all this, at what a rate the ſcripture magnifies theſe virtues, as the great things of religion, the end of the goſpel, and that wherein our chriſtianity does mainly conſiſt. The conſideration whereof would make a man ſtand amazed, to think

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how theſe virtues ſhould ever fall into ſo much contempt among thoſe who call themſelves chriſtians, and do every day read the bible; and come to be accounted but low and pitiful things, in compariſon of I know not what fancies and conceits, wherein ſome are pleaſed to place religion. For what can the beſt religion that ever was in the world (which chriſtianity certainly is) be better placed in, than in theſe and the like virtues; all which are ſo excellent in their nature and uſe, and have ſo direct a tendency both to the happineſs of particular perſons ſingly conſidered, and of humane ſociety, and ſeveral of them, eſpecially thoſe inſtanced in, in the text, "goodneſs, and righte-"ouſneſs, and truth," are the very nature and perfection of GOD himſelf?

And what more worthy to be "the fruits of the "HOLY SPIRIT of GOD," and the effects of a divine power and influence working upon the minds of men, than ſuch qualities and diſpoſitions as render us ſo like to GOD, and do ſo nearly reſemble the higheſt excellencies and perfections of the divine nature? And therefore our SAVIOUR uſeth this as an argument to perſuade us to be good, and merciful, and patient; becauſe theſe qualities are ſo near a reſemblance and imitation of the divine perfection, the neareſt that creatures are capable of, Matth. v. 48. "Be ye there-"fore perfect, even as your FATHER which is in "heaven is perfect."

And thus I have diſpatched the four obſervations from the text; that "the fruits of the SPIRIT" are plain and ſenſible effects, appearing in the diſpoſitions and lives of men; that they are of an eternal and immutable nature, and of perpetual and indiſpenſable obligation; and though they be moral virtues, yet they

they are likewiſe " the fruits of the SPIRIT;" and SERM.
are by no means to be ſlighted and undervalued, as CCII.
low and mean attainments in religion.

All that now remains, is to make ſome inferences from what has been diſcourſed on this text.

And if this diſcourſe be true, then the want of theſe virtues mentioned in the text, and the reigning of the contrary vices in us, is a clear and undeniable evidence, notwithſtanding all our fair profeſſions and pretences, that we are not true chriſtians. For if we do not bring forth " the fruits of the SPIRIT," we have not the SPIRIT of CHRIST; and then St. Paul hath determined our caſe, that " if any " man have not the SPIRIT of CHRIST he is " none of his." If theſe chriſtian graces and virtues mentioned in the text, " goodneſs, and righteouſneſs, " and truth," do not ſhine forth in our lives and converſations, it is plain, according to the apoſtle's reaſoning in this and other texts, that we are not " children of the light," becauſe we do not " walk " as children of the light," as thoſe that are enlightened by the SPIRIT of GOD; for " the fruit of the " SPIRIT, or the fruit of the light," as ſome copies have it, " is in all goodneſs, and righteouſneſs, and " truth." And if theſe fruits be not found in us, 'tis a plain evidence that we do not " walk in the SPIRIT," that we are not " led and guided by the " SPIRIT of GOD;" for " the fruits of the SPI- " RIT, as well as the works of the fleſh are mani- " feſt," ſufficiently plain and viſible in the converſations of men; and according as we " fulfil the luſts " of the one, or bring forth the fruits of the other," we may certainly judge whether we have the SPIRIT of CHRIST or not, that is, whether we be true

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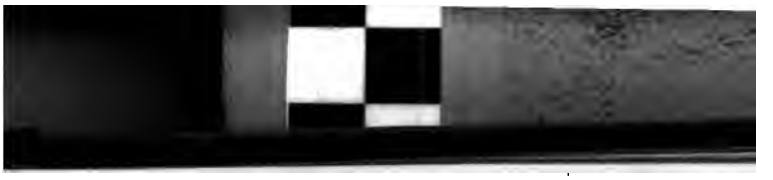
chriſtians, or do only uſurp a name, and take a title to ourſelves, which does not of right belong to us. We need not to trouble and puzzle ourſelves with a great many doubtful and obſcure marks, to find out by them what our ſtate and condition is, and whether we be the children of GOD or not; if we have a mind to know it, we may ſoon bring the matter to an iſſue, by looking into our own hearts and lives, whether "the "fruits of the SPIRIT be there, in all goodneſs, "and righteouſneſs, and truth," and in all thoſe virtues which are elſewhere mentioned as "fruits of the "SPIRIT." Theſe are plain and ſenſible things, and if theſe virtues be in us, they cannot be hid from ourſelves or others, but will ſhine forth in our lives and converſations, in all our words and actions. Goodneſs is ſoon ſeen, it hath a native beauty and brightneſs in it, which draws the eyes of men towards it; and it diſcovers itſelf by its effects, which are perceived and felt in thoſe upon whom it is exerciſed. Righteouſneſs and truth, are likewiſe very ſenſible to ourſelves and others; and ſo are the contrary diſpoſitions and practices. No man does an unjuſt thing, but his conſcience tells him he does ſo; no man ſpeaks contrary to truth, or breaks his word and promiſe, but he is guilty to himſelf of ſo doing. And thus I might inſtance in all other virtues and vices. If we will but look into ourſelves, and obſerve our own actions, we may eaſily diſcern, whether we be malicious and envious, cruel and hard-hearted, cenſorious and uncharitable; or good, and kind, and merciful, and ready to forgive; whether we make conſcience of our word or not; and whether we do to others, as we would have them do to us Nothing is more eaſy to be known than it is, which of theſe qualities does poſſeſs and





and rule our hearts, and govern and bear ſway in our lives. And if we can know this, we know whether we have the fruits of the SPIRIT or not; "for the "fruit of the SPIRIT is in all goodneſs, and righte- "ouſneſs, and truth." And by theſe "fruits of the SPIRIT," or the want of them, (which are both very diſcernable) we may know what our ſtate and condition is, whether we have the SPIRIT of GOD, and be true and ſincere chriſtians. A great many men tire themſelves in an endleſs enquiry, concerning the good eſtate of their ſouls towards GOD; whether they be the children of GOD, and whether they have the SPIRIT of GOD or not, and are trying themſelves all their lives, by obſcure and uncertain marks, which will never bring the matter to any clear iſſue, but leave them ſtill in the dark and in doubt, concerning their own ſincerity, and the integrity of their hearts towards GOD. And how can it be otherwiſe ſince they have been ſo often told by unſkilful men, that they cannot know their own hearts, and conſequently can never be aſſured of their own integrity and ſince- rity? This, I muſt confeſs, is but an ill ſign of ſin- cerity, when we find it ſo hard a matter to diſcern it in ourſelves. Job found it clearly in himſelf, and was very confidently aſſured of it, Job xxvii. 5, 6. "Till "I die ſays he, I will not remove my integrity from "me. My righteouſneſs I hold faſt, and will not let "it go." But if a man cannot know his own heart, and whether he have integrity or not; how ſhall he know either when he parts with it, or when he holds it faſt? the apoſtle in the text gives us a ſure mark whereby we may know when we have the SPIRIT of GOD, by the ſenſible fruits and effects of it.

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I will conclude all with the apoſtle's exhortation, Phil. iv. 8. "Finally, brethren, whatſoever things "are true, whatſoever things are honeſt, whatſoever "things are juſt, whatſoever things are pure, what-"ſoever things are lovely, whatſoever things are of "good report; if there be any virtue, and if there "be any praiſe, think on theſe things." Think of them and regard them as principal parts of your duty, and particular inſtances of that univerſal goodneſs which chriſtianity teacheth and requires, as the proper and genuine effects of that "grace of GOD which "hath appeared to all men, and brings ſalvation," that is, of the goſpel. And if the doctrine of the goſpel do not produce theſe bleſſed fruits and effects in the hearts and lives of thoſe who profeſs the chriſtian religion; then, as the apoſtle to the Hebrews reaſons, "How ſhall we eſcape if we neglect ſo great ſalva-"tion, which was at firſt ſpoken by the LORD, and "afterwards confirmed by them that heard him; "GOD alſo bearing them witneſs, both with ſigns, "and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of "the HOLY GHOST, according to his own will?"

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# SERMON CCIII.

## The neceſſity of ſupernatural grace, in order to a chriſtian life.

JOHN xv. 5.

——*For without me ye can do nothing.*

IN the beginning of this chapter, our SAVIOUR compares his myſtical body, that is his church, to a vine, which his FATHER, whom he compares to a huſbandman, hath planted. "I am the true "vine, and my FATHER is the huſbandman." To repreſent to us the union that is betwixt CHRIST and all true chriſtians, and the influence of grace and ſpiritual life, which all that are united to him do derive and receive from him, he ſets it forth to us by the reſemblance of a vine and branches. As there is a natural vital union between the vine and the branches, ſo there is a ſpiritual vital union between CHRIST and true chriſtians; and this union is the cauſe of our fruitfulneſs in the works of obedience and a good life. There are ſome indeed that ſeem to be grafted into CHRIST by an outward profeſſion of chriſtianity, who yet derive no influence from him, ſo as to bring forth fruit, becauſe they are not vitally united to him; theſe the huſbandman will lop off, and take away as unprofitable and dead branches, ver 2. "Every "branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away; that is, they who only make an outward profeſſion of faith in CHRIST, but do not bring forth the fruits of obedience and a good life, ſhall finally be ſeparated

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SERM. CCIII. from him: "and every branch that beareth fruit he "purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." And becauſe all our fruitfulneſs depends upon our union with CHRIST, as the fruitfulneſs of the branches depends upon their union with the vine, therefore he bids us be careful, that this union be preſerved and continued, ver. 4. "Abide in me, and I in you." We are planted into CHRIST by faith, and the belief of his doctrine; and we abide in him by a firm purpoſe and reſolution of obedience. So they are ſaid to abide and continue in CHRIST's word, who obey and practiſe his doctrine, John viii. 31. "Then ſaid JESUS to "thoſe Jews which believed on him, if ye continue in "my word, then are ye my diſciples indeed." So St. James explains it, Jam. i. 25. "But whoſo looketh "into the perfect law of liberty," that is, the chriſtian doctrine, "and continueth therein;" how is that? "he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the "work, this man ſhall be bleſſed in his deed." And 1 John iii. 6. "Whoſoever abideth in him, ſinneth not."

"Abide in me, and I in you." CHRIST is ſaid to abide in us, by the continual aids and influences of his grace and HOLY SPIRIT; and if we abide in him, by the reſolution of obedience, his grace and aſſiſtance will be continually derived to us, to bring this good reſolution to effect, and to enable us to bring forth fruit. "For as the branch cannot bear fruit of itſelf, "except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except "ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches; "he that abideth in me, and I in him, the ſame "bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can "do nothing, χωρὶς ἐμοῦ, out of me," being ſeparated from me, "ye can do nothing."

There are two things to be explained in the words, and

and then I ſhall come to the aſſertion or propoſition contained in them. SERM. CCIII.

Firſt, what is here meant by being "without "CHRIST, or out of him."

Secondly, in what ſenſe, and with what limitations we are to underſtand that expreſſion, "we can do "nothing."

Firſt, what is here meant by being "without "CHRIST, or out of him." Out of me ye "can do nothing;" that is, unleſs we be united to him, and by virtue of that union derive from him the ſupernatural aids and influences of his grace, "we "can do nothing." 'Tis true indeed, that without GOD we can do nothing; we cannot think, or ſpeak, or do any natural action, without the common aſſiſtance and concurrence of his providence; for "in him we live, and move, and have our "being." But this aſſiſtance is natural and ordinary, and commonly afforded to every man in the world: but the grace and aſſiſtance of CHRIST ſignifies ſomething extraordinary and ſupernatural, that which divines mean by ſupernatural grace, in oppoſition to the ordinary concurrence of divine providence to all the actions of men.

Secondly, in what ſenſe, and with what limitations we are to underſtand that expreſſion, "we can do no-"thing: without me ye can do nothing." And this is neceſſary to be limited to ſuch effects as our SAVIOUR was ſpeaking of, viz. the proper acts of a chriſtian life, obedience to the laws and precepts of the goſpel, which our SAVIOUR here, in purſuance of the allegory, calls "bearing fruit, and bringing forth "much fruit." For if it be not thus limited, but extended to all kinds of actions, natural or civil, it is not true

that

SERM. CCIII. that we cannot do theſe without ſupernatural aſſiſtance, and the grace of CHRIST. For theſe we may do by the common and natural aſſiſtance and concurrence of GOD, equally afforded to men; nay, more than this, we may by this common aſſiſtance do thoſe actions which tend to make us ſpiritually good, and are the means appointed by GOD for that purpoſe. We may go to church, we may read and hear GOD's word, and upon the hearing of it may reflect upon the actions of our lives, and may be convinced of our ſin and danger, and upon this conviction, may beg GOD's mercy and grace to reform and grow better. But then we cannot effect this without ſupernatural grace and aſſiſtance. So that this aſſertion here in the text, is to be limited to the purpoſes of regeneration, and ſanctification, and perſeverance in holineſs; that a man cannot make himſelf good, he cannot convert and change himſelf, nor by his own ſtrength continue and hold out in a good courſe, we can do nothing of this, without the grace and aſſiſtance of CHRIST.

So that the plain deſign of this propoſition here in the text, is to aſſert the neceſſity of ſupernatural grace, to make men good, and to make them perſevere in a courſe of holineſs and obedience. In ſpeaking to this argument, I ſhall,

Firſt, ſhew what it is we mean by the ſupernatural grace and aſſiſtance of CHRIST.

Secondly, that to this the ſcripture doth conſtantly attribute our regeneration, and ſanctification and perſeverance in holineſs.

Thirdly, that there is great reaſon to aſſert the neceſſity of GOD's ſupernatural grace and aſſiſtance to theſe purpoſes.

Fourthly, that this ſupernatural grace and aſſiſtance does

does not exclude, but ſuppoſe the concurrence of our own endeavours. SERM. CCIII.

Fifthly, that this grace and aſſiſtance is derived to us from our union with CHRIST.

Firſt what we mean by the ſupernatural grace and aſſiſtance of CHRIST. Whatever natural power we have to do any thing, is from GOD, and an effect of his goodneſs; but GOD conſidering the lapſed and decayed condition of mankind, ſent his SON into the world, to recover us out of that ſinful and miſerable condition into which we are fallen, to reveal eternal life to us, and the way to it, and to purchaſe happineſs for us, and to offer it to us upon certain terms and conditions to be performed by us: but we being weak and without ſtrength, ſlaves to ſin, and under the power of evil habits, and unable to free ourſelves from this bondage by any natural power left in us, our bleſſed SAVIOUR, in great pity and tenderneſs to mankind, hath in his goſpel offered, and is ready to afford to us an extraordinary aſſiſtance of his grace and HOLY SPIRIT, to ſupply the defects of our natural power and ſtrength. And this ſupernatural grace of CHRIST is that alone, which can enable us to perform what he requires of us. And this, according to the ſeveral uſes and occaſions of it, is by divines called by ſeveral names. As it puts good motions into us, and excites and ſtirs us up to that which is good, 'tis called preventing grace; becauſe it prevents any motion or deſire on our parts: as it aſſiſts and ſtrengthens us in the doing of any thing that is good, it is called aſſiſting grace: as it keeps us conſtant in a good courſe, it is called perſevering grace: and may have ſeveral other denominations, in ſeveral other reſpects: for it is ſuited to all our occaſions and neceſſities.

Secondly,

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Secondly, to this grace and aſſiſtance of GOD, the ſcripture doth conſtantly attribute our regeneration, and ſanctification, and perſeverance in holineſs. We are ſaid to be "born again of the SPIRIT," to be "ſanctified by the renewing of the HOLY GHOST," to be "led by the SPIRIT of GOD, and through the "SPIRIT to mortify the deeds of the fleſh; to do "all things through CHRIST ſtrengthening us, "and to be kept by the power of GOD through "faith unto ſalvation." All which, and many more texts that I might inſtance in, do plainly expreſs to us the ſupernatural aſſiſtance of CHRIST, whereby we become good, and are enabled to do any thing that is good, and preſerved and continued in a good courſe. As the ſcripture doth every where attribute ſin to our own corrupt hearts, and to the temptation and inſtigation of the devil; ſo does it conſtantly aſcribe all the good that we do to the grace of CHRIST, or, which is all one, to the bleſſed motions and aſſiſtances of GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT. For "the SPIRIT of GOD is called the SPIRIT "of CHRIST, yea CHRIST," Rom. viii. 9, 10. "But ye are not in the fleſh, but in the SPIRIT, if "ſo be that the SPIRIT of GOD dwell in you. "Now if any man have not the SPIRIT of "CHRIST, he is none of his. And if CHRIST "be in you, the body is dead becauſe of ſin." By which it is evident, that "the SPIRIT of GOD, "and the SPIRIT of CHRIST, and CHRIST," do in this text ſignify one and the ſame thing.

Thirdly, there is great reaſon to aſſert the neceſſity of this grace and aſſiſtance to theſe purpoſes, whether we conſider the corruption and impotency of humane nature, the ſtrange power of evil habits and cuſtoms,

cuſtoms, the fickleneſs and inconſtancy of humane reſolution, or the malice and activity of the devil to ſeduce and tempt us to ſin. SERM. CCIII.

1. If we conſider the corruption and impotency of humane nature. This the light of nature cannot but acknowledge. The philoſophers and wiſe men among the heathens, were ſenſible of a great depravation in our ſouls, and degeneracy from the divine life; and therefore they preſcribed ſeveral ways and methods for the purifying of our ſouls, and the raiſing of them to that purity and perfection, to which they ſuppoſed they were deſigned: but they were wholly ignorant from whence this depravation came; and therefore many of them ſuppoſed a pre-exiſtence of ſouls; that is, that our ſouls, which now inhabit theſe bodies, had lived in a former ſtate, and for ſome faults they had committed in that ſtate, were by the juſtice of GOD ſentenced to be impriſoned in theſe bodies, as a puniſhment for their former ſins. They could not imagine that our ſouls came impure out of GOD's hands; and to avoid that inconvenience, they imagined a former ſtate wherein they had ſinned. And this was the beſt account they could give of the general depravation of mankind.

But the ſcripture hath given us a more certain account of this; that "by one man ſin entered into "the world, and death by ſin." This is the true ſource and original of the univerſal degeneracy of mankind, and of the weakneſs and impotency of humane nature. The fall of our firſt parents hath derived corruption and weakneſs upon the whole race and poſterity of Adam; for "whatſoever is born "of the fleſh, is fleſh."

So that conſidering our natural impotency, there is

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great need of a ſupernatural and extraordinary power and aſſiſtance, to recover us from this degeneracy, and "to renew us after the image of him who created us, "in righteouſneſs and true holineſs." And therefore when the ſcripture ſpeaks of the redemption of CHRIST, it repreſents our condition, not only as miſerable, but helpleſs, Rom. v. 6. "For when we were "yet without ſtrength, in due time CHRIST died "for the ungodly." When mankind was under an utter impotency of recovering itſelf out of that ſtate of ſin and miſery into which it was plunged, "in the "fulneſs of time," that is, when GOD thought it moſt convenient, "he ſent his SON into the world, "to die for ſinners;" and "by that SPIRIT which "raiſed him from the dead," to enable us to mortify our luſts, and "to riſe to newneſs of life."

2. The neceſſity of this grace and aſſiſtance will farther appear, if we conſider the ſtrange power of evil habits and cuſtoms. The other is a natural, and this a contracted impotency, whereby men make themſelves much weaker than they were by nature. The habits of ſin being added to our natural impotency, are like ſo many diſeaſes ſuperinduced upon a conſtitution naturally weak, which do all help to increaſe the man's infirmity. Evil habits in ſcripture are compared to bonds and fetters, which do as effectually hinder a man from motion, and putting forth himſelf to action, as if he were quite lame, hand and foot. Habit and cuſtom is a kind of ſecond nature; and ſo far as any thing is natural, ſo far it is neceſſary, and we cannot do otherwiſe. By paſſing from one degree of ſin to another, men become fixed and hardened in their wickedneſs, and do inſenſibly bring themſelves into that ſtate, out of which they are utterly unable to recover themſelves.

When men have been long accuſtomed to evil, and are once grown old in vice, it is as hard to reform and rectify them, as to recover a body bowed down with age, to its firſt ſtraightneſs. When men have continued long in a ſinful courſe, they are almoſt under a fatal neceſſity of being wicked, and under all imaginable diſadvantages of contributing any thing to their own recovery. The ſcripture repreſents the condition of ſuch perſons to us, by ſuch things as are naturally impoſſible. "Can the Ethiopian change his ſkin, or the "leopard his ſpots? then may ye alſo do good, that "are accuſtomed to do evil." Now this conſideration added to the former, to the impotency of nature, the ſtrength of evil habits, is ſtill a farther evidence of the neceſſity of ſupernatural grace and aſſiſtance for our recovery. For the greater our impotency is, ſo much more need is there of an extraordinary power and aſſiſtance, to enable us to do our duty. SERM. CCIII.

3. This will yet farther appear, if we conſider the inconſtancy and fickleneſs of humane reſolution. Suppoſe that upon hearing the terrible threatenings of GOD's word againſt ſin, or upon the natural checks and convictions of conſcience for having done wickedly, a ſinner ſhould of himſelf (as there is reaſon enough for it) entertain a purpoſe and reſolution of breaking off his ſinful courſe; yet how unable would this reſolution be to withſtand the powerful aſſaults of temptation, and the violent returns of his own inclinations to his former luſts? this almoſt every man finds by his own frequent and ſad experience, how inconſtant his mind is to his own purpoſes, and how unfaithful and treacherous to his moſt ſolemn and ſevere reſolutions; how falſe we are to ourſelves, and to the vows and promiſes we have made to GOD, and our

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own ſouls, when the occaſions and temptations of ſin preſent themſelves to us. So that our need of GOD's grace is in no caſe more plain and evident, than to keep us ſtedfaſt to our reſolution of forſaking our ſins, and amending our lives; and without this, we find how uncertain and ineffectual all our good purpoſes are, "like the morning cloud, and as the early dew which "paſſeth away." So that we muſt ſay with the prophet Jeremy, chap. x. 23. "O LORD, I know that "the way of man is not in himſelf; it is not in man "that walketh, to direct his ſteps."

4. Beſides all theſe diſadvantages from ourſelves, from the impotency of our natures, and the ſtrength of our luſts, and the inconſtancy of our reſolutions, we have likewiſe a powerful enemy without, the devil, who is very malicious and active to promote our ruin, by keeping us in this ſlavery. He is the great enemy of our ſouls, and his malice will not ſuffer him to neglect any opportunity of doing us miſchief. He obſerves and watcheth our tempers and diſpoſitions, and accordingly plants his temptations and plays them upon us, where we are weakeſt, and they may do the greateſt execution. So that we are not only weak within, but ſtrongly aſſaulted without; "we wreſtle not only with "fleſh and blood; but with principalities, and powers, "and ſpiritual wickedneſſes." All the powers of darkneſs are combined againſt us, to work our deſtruction; and therefore we have need of an extraordinary ſtrength and aſſiſtance to enable us to contend with ſuch powerful adverſaries, upon ſo many diſadvantages. And our comfort is, that GOD offers his grace to us, and "that "is ſufficient for us. Greater is he that is in us, than "he that is in the world." The SPIRIT that dwells in good men, and is ready to aſſiſt them to all good purpoſes,

purpoſes, is ſtronger than that evil ſpirit which is in the world, and "goes about like a roaring lion, ſeek-"ing whom he may devour."

Fourthly, this ſupernatural grace and aſſiſtance does not exclude, but ſuppoſe the concurrence of our endeavours. The grace of GOD does not do all, without any concurrence on our part. It ſtrengthens and aſſiſts us; but does not produce the whole effect, without any activity or endeavour of ours. When our SAVIOUR ſays, "without me ye can do nothing," he does imply, that by the aſſiſtance of grace, we may perform all the duties of the chriſtian life, we may "bear fruit, and bring forth much fruit." And to keep to the metaphor in the text, the branches of a vine are not merely paſſive, but contribute their part to the production of fruit, though they derive continual ſupplies of ſap and virtue from the vine. When the apoſtle ſays, "I can do all things through "CHRIST ſtrengthening me," he does not think it a diſparagement to the grace of CHRIST, to ſay "he could do all things" by the aſſiſtance of it. He acknowledgeth his own impotency and weakneſs, and glories in the ſtrength and aſſiſtance of CHRIST. But an acknowledgment of impotency does not exclude endeavour; for impotency does not ſignify an utter want of power, but the weakneſs and inſufficiency of it, that it is diſproportioned to the work and duty required. So that though "we are not ſufficient "of ourſelves" for any thing that is good; yet being aſſiſted by GOD, we may co-operate with him to the killing of ſin, to "the cleanſing of ourſelves from "all filthineſs of fleſh, and ſpirit, and to the perfect-"ing of holineſs in the fear of GOD." As the apoſtles were "workers together with GOD," in the

SERM. CCIII. ſalvation of others, 2 Cor. vi. 11. "We then, as "workers together with GOD, beſeech you, that ye "receive not the grace of GOD in vain;" I ſay, as they were "workers together with GOD," in the ſalvation of others, ſo may we be ſaid to be, "in work-"ing out our own ſalvation;" nay, we are commanded to be ſo, Philip. ii. 12, 13. "Work out your own "ſalvation with fear and trembling: for it is GOD "that worketh in you both to will and to do." So that GOD's preventing and aſſiſting grace, his "work-"ing in us both to will and to do," is ſo far from excluding our endeavours, that it is uſed by the apoſtle as a ſtrong reaſon and argument to the contrary, "work out your own ſalvation: for it is GOD that "worketh in you both to will and to do, of his "own good pleaſure." And if this were not ſo, all the exhortations of ſcripture were to no purpoſe, "our "preaching were vain," and your hearing vain: for nothing can be vainer, than to perſuade men to do their duty, if this be true that GOD does all, and we do nothing.

Fifthly and laſtly, this grace and aſſiſtance is derived to us from our union with CHRIST. So ſoon as we believe in him, and heartily embrace his doctrine, we are united to him; and if we continue in this faith, "we abide in him, and he in us;" and by virtue of this union, the influences of his grace, the aids and aſſiſtances of his SPIRIT are derived to us, to all the purpoſes of holineſs and obedience, to enable us "to do the will of GOD," and "patiently con-"tinue in well-doing," and "to preſerve us to his "heavenly kingdom."

There is no other myſtery in this union, than that which I have plainly told you, that it is effected by

our

our becoming the diſciples of CHRIST, and ſincerely embracing his doctrine; that it is continued by our bringing forth the fruits of holineſs and obedience. By this we become "branches of that true vine;" and being ſo, derive ſap and virtue from him, the vital influences of his grace and HOLY SPIRIT, to aſſiſt us in our duty, and to make us to be "fruitful in "every good work," and "to abound in all the fruits "of righteouſneſs, which are by JESUS CHRIST "to the praiſe and the glory of GOD." SERM. CCLII.

But when I ſay this grace and aſſiſtance is derived to us from our union, I do not intend to exclude the neceſſity of GOD's grace and HOLY SPIRIT to the converſion of a ſinner, and his firſt planting into CHRIST: but when we ſay that chriſtians derive the influences of grace and aſſiſtance from their union with CHRIST, this ſuppoſeth them to be chriſtians already, and planted into CHRIST, and that this likewiſe is the work of GOD's grace. For if we cannot bring forth fruit, without the aid and aſſiſtance of his grace, much leſs without that could we be planted into him, and united with him.

I ſhall conclude my diſcourſe upon this ſubject, with three or four inferences from what hath been delivered.

I. If the grace of GOD be ſo neceſſary to all the ends of holineſs and obedience, and to our perſeverance in a good courſe, then there is great reaſon why we ſhould continually depend upon GOD, and every day earneſtly pray to him for the aids and aſſiſtances of his grace, and the influence of his HOLY SPIRIT, to guide, and direct, and ſtrengthen us in all goodneſs, and "to "keep us by his mighty power through faith unto "ſalvation." For though GOD have promiſed his aſſiſtance to us, and is always ready to afford it; yet

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we are to remember, that it is a free diſpenſation of his grace and goodneſs, "he works in us both to "will and to do, of his own good pleaſure." And the promiſe of this grace is not ſo abſolute, but that he expects we ſhould earneſtly ſue and beg to him for it. He hath not promiſed his "HOLY SPIRIT," but "to them that aſk him," and that with great earneſtneſs and importunity; we muſt "aſk, and "ſeek, and knock." Even where he promiſeth "to give us a new heart and a new SPIRIT;" yet he ſays, that "for all theſe things he will be ſought to "by the houſe of Iſrael." And though ſometimes "he be found of them that ſeek him not," and do frequently prevent us with his grace, and the motions of his bleſſed SPIRIT; yet we have no reaſon to expect it without our ſeeking of it.

II. We ſhould thankfully acknowledge and aſcribe all the good that is in us, and all that we do, to the grace and aſſiſtance of GOD, exciting and ſtrengthening us to every good work, without which "we can do nothing;" and ſay, with David, "not "unto us, not unto us, O LORD; but to thy "name be the praiſe." And with St. Paul, "yet "not I; but the grace of GOD which was with "me." As the children of Iſrael were brought out of Egypt, and conducted to the poſſeſſion of the good land (which is a type of heaven) by the preſence and power of GOD going along with them, "not by their own ſword and bow, but by a mighty "hand, and an out-ſtretched arm:" ſo if ever we be reſcued from the bondage of ſin, and quickned to newneſs of life, if ever we be ſaved, and come to heaven, we muſt be aſſiſted and conducted, and "kept by the mighty power of GOD;" for "by "grace

grace we are ſaved, and that not of ourſelves, for it is the gift of GOD." SERM. CCIII.

III. Let us take heed that we "reſiſt not the SPIRIT of GOD, and receive not this grace of GOD in vain." And this we do, whenever we reſiſt the motions of GOD's bleſſed SPIRIT, and do not make uſe of that grace and aſſiſtance which GOD offers to us, by being "workers together with GOD," and co-operating with his grace by our own ſincere endeavours. GOD's SPIRIT doth frequently put good motions into us, and ready to further them, if we comply with them, and to enable us to bring them to effect: but men may, and many times do, "reſiſt the HOLY GHOST," and quench the motions of that bleſſed SPIRIT of grace; and then GOD juſtly leaves us, and withdraws his aſſiſtance, and takes away his HOLY SPIRIT from us. But if we comply with them, his grace and help is ready to carry us ſtill further, and to aſſiſt us more and more, that we may go from ſtrength to ſtrength, till we come to appear before him in Sion."

IV. The conſideration of our own impotency, is no excuſe to our ſloth and negligence, if ſo be the grace of GOD be ready to aſſiſt us. For if that be offer'd to us, and always at hand to help us, where men have not provoked GOD to withdraw it; then it is our own fault, if we do not do our duty, and if we fall ſhort of eternal happineſs. For we are really able to do all that which GOD's grace and aſſiſtance is ready to enable us to do. St. Paul reckons upon the ſtrength of CHRIST as in ſome ſenſe his power. "I am able to do all things through CHRIST ſtrengthening me."

V. and

V. and laſtly, the conſideration of our own impotency is no juſt ground of diſcouragement to our endeavours, conſidering the promiſe of divine grace and aſſiſtance. Now that GOD is enter'd into a new covenant of grace with us, and offers us eternal life upon the conditions of faith and repentance and ſincere obedience, the greater our weakneſs is, the more reaſon we have to expect his grace and aſſiſtance; becauſe we know that he deals ſincerely with us, and intends to bring us to that happineſs which he offers to us; and therefore we are aſſured that he does not command us impoſſibilities, and ſeeing we are weak and inſufficient of ourſelves to do what he requires of us, that he is ready to afford us his grace to enable us to do it.

# SERMON CCIV.

## Of the form, and the power of godlineſs.

2 TIM. iii. 5.

*Having a form of godlineſs, but denying the power thereof.*

SERM. CCIV. The firſt ſermon on this text.

THE apoſtle in theſe words diſtinguiſhes two things in religion, which do not, but ought, always to go together, viz. the ſhew and pretence of religion, and the life and power of it. He condemns neither, but blames the ſeparating of them. The latter indeed cannot be without the firſt; for where-ever religion really is, there will be ſome appearance of it: but the former may be, and often

often is, without the latter. Men may make a great SERM. shew of religion, and yet be very deſtitute of the CCIV. power of it. And ſuch were thoſe perſons the apoſtle deſcribes here in the text; they were guilty of the greateſt faults and vices in their lives, but thought to cloke all theſe by an outward ſhew and appearance of godlineſs. "Having a form of godlineſs, but "denying the power thereof."

The word μόρφωσις, which is here tranſlated form, ſignifies, the ſhew or image of a thing, which is dead and ineffectual: in oppoſition to the reality and life, which is quick and powerful. And, I think, this word is but once more uſed in the new teſtament, and much in the ſame ſenſe, viz. for an empty and ineffectual knowledge of religion without the practice of it. Rom. ii. 17, 20, 21. The apoſtle there ſpeaks of ſome phariſaical Jews, who gloried in their knowledge of the law, but violated it in their practice, "behold, thou art called a Jew, and reſteſt in the "law, and haſt the form of knowledge, and of the "truth in the law. Thou therefore that teacheſt ano-"ther, teacheſt thou not thyſelf? thou that preach-"eſt, a man ſhould not ſteal, doſt thou ſteal?" So that "a form of godlineſs" ſignifies an empty ſhew and profeſſion of religion without the real effects of it.

And they who are deſtitute of theſe, are ſaid "to "deny the power of religion." It is uſual in ſeveral languages to draw metaphors from words to actions; and men are ſaid to contradict or deny any thing, when they do contrary to what they pretend; and ſo this phraſe is elſewhere uſed, Tit. i. 10. "They pro-"feſs to know GOD, but in their works they deny "him," 1 Tim. v. 8. "If any man provide not for "his

SERM. CCIV. " his own, eſpecially for thoſe of his own houſe, he " hath denied the faith." The apoſtle does not mean that ſuch an one denies the faith by expreſs declaration in words, but by actions ſo contradictory to the chriſtian faith, as an infidel would hardly do. " He " hath denied the faith, and is worſe than an infidel."

In the handling of theſe words, I ſhall do theſe four things.

Firſt, ſhew wherein " a form of godlineſs" conſiſts.

Secondly, wherein the " power of it lies?"

Thirdly, give ſome marks and characters whereby we may know when theſe are ſeparated, when " the form of godlineſs" is deſtitute of " the power."

Fourthly, ſhew that a mere " form of godlineſs" without " the power of it," is inſignificant to all the great ends and purpoſes of religion.

Firſt, to ſhew wherein " a form of godlineſs" doth conſiſt. In general it conſiſts in an external ſhew and profeſſion of religion, or of any eminent part of it, or of that which is reputed to be ſo; and a form of religion is more or leſs complete, according to the extent of it. Some pitch upon one part of religion, and ſet themſelves chiefly to make a ſhew of that; others take in more parts of it, and endeavour to expreſs and counterfeit them; ſo that the forms of religion are various and different, and not to be reduced to any fix'd and conſtant ſtandard; but they commonly appear in ſome one or more of theſe ſhapes:

I. An external devotion.

II. An orthodox profeſſion of the chriſtian faith.

III. Enthuſiaſm and pretence to inſpiration.

IV. A great external ſhew of mortification.

V. An imperfect repentance and partial reformation.

VI. The

VI. The appearance and oſtentation of ſome particular grace and virtue. SERM. CCIV.

VII. A great zeal for ſome party, or opinions, or circumſtances of religion.

VIII. Sillineſs and freakiſhneſs, and either a pretended or real ignorance in the common affairs and concernments of humane life.

IX. Much noiſe and talk about religion.

Theſe are the ſeveral forms of religion which men are wont to aſſume. Not that theſe do always go ſingly; but ſometimes men put on one, ſometimes more of them, as may beſt ſerve their ſeveral turns and intereſts. Nor would I be underſtood to condemn all theſe; for ſeveral of theſe particulars which I have mention'd are good in themſelves, and neceſſary parts of religion; but being deſtitute of other things wherein the life of religion doth conſiſt, they are but "a form of godlineſs."

I. External devotion. This is the moſt common form of religion, and eaſieſt to be aſſumed, and therefore it is that ſo many take it up. And this is good in itſelf, and a neceſſary part of religion: but if there be no more than this, it is a mere image and picture of religion, abominable to GOD, and fulſom and odious to diſcerning men.

Now this external devotion ſhews itſelf more eſpecially theſe two ways.

1. In a frequent and diligent uſe of the means and inſtruments of religion.

2. In a curious and nice regard to the modes and circumſtances of performing theſe.

1. In a frequent and diligent uſe of the means and inſtruments of religion, ſuch as prayer, reading, and hearing the word of GOD, and receiving of the bleſſed

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ſed ſacrament. Theſe are not the life of religion, the great end and deſign of it, but the means and inſtruments which GOD hath appointed for the begetting and increaſing of holineſs and virtue in us. Many exerciſe themſelves in theſe with great conſtancy and devotion, pray to GOD, and read the bible frequently, go to church duly, and hear GOD's word attentively, and receive the ſacrament reverently, and behave themſelves devoutly in all parts of publick worſhip; and yet all this may be but a mere form, and certainly is no more, where the great end of all this is neglected, and men do not ſincerely endeavour to do what GOD's word directs them to, and what they daily pray to GOD to enable them to do.

For all theſe means are in order to ſome farther effect and deſign. We read and hear the word of GOD, that we may know his will, and that we may do it; that by the precepts and counſels of the holy ſcriptures we may learn and underſtand our duty; and by the motives and arguments which are there offer'd to us, we may effectually be perſuaded to the practice of it. We pray to GOD, not only for the forgiveneſs of our ſins, but for his grace and aſſiſtance, to enable us to mortify and ſubdue them, and to proceed in all virtue and godlineſs of living. We receive the ſacrament, to inflame our love to GOD and our bleſſed SAVIOUR, to excite in us a greater hatred of ſin, and to confirm us in the purpoſe and reſolution of well-doing. Theſe are the great ends for which GOD hath appointed all theſe helps and means, and if theſe ends be not obtain'd, in vain do we worſhip GOD, all our religion is but mere ſhew and pageantry. We are but like the people GOD himſelf deſcribes, Iſa. xxix. 13. "This people draw near me with their mouth,

"and

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" and with their lips do they honour me, but have re-
" moved their heart far from me." And like thoſe, Ezek. xxxiii. 30, 31, 32. who " ſpake one to ano-
" ther, every one to his brother, ſaying, come, I pray
" you, and hear what is the word that cometh forth
" from the LORD. And they come unto thee as the
" people cometh, and they ſit before thee as my peo-
" ple, and they hear thy words, but they will not do
" them: for with their mouth they ſhew much love,
" but their heart goeth after their covetouſneſs. And
" lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely ſong of one
" that hath a pleaſant voice, and can play well on an
" inſtrument: for they hear thy words, but they do
" them not." This is not to worſhip GOD, but impudently to affront him; and if we take this for religion, we put the groſſeſt cheat imaginable upon ourſelves. Hear how GOD challenges the people of Iſrael upon this account, Jer. vii. 2, 3, 4, &c. " Hear
" the word of the LORD, all ye of Judah, that en-
ter in at theſe gates to worſhip the LORD, Thus
" ſaith the LORD of hoſts, the GOD of Iſrael;
" amend your ways and your doings, and I will cauſe
" you to dwell in this place." This is the great end of all religious worſhip and devotion, the reformation of our lives and actions; and if it have not this effect, it is a cheat. " Truſt ye not in lying words, ſaying, the
" the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD,
" the temple of the LORD are theſe. For if ye tho-
" roughly amend your ways, and your doings; if ye
" thoroughly execute judgment between a man and
" his neighbour; if ye oppreſs not the ſtranger, the
" fatherleſs, and the widow, and ſhed not innocent
" blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to
" your hurt: then will I cauſe you to dwell in this
" place,

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" place, in the land that I gave to your fathers for
" ever and ever. Behold, ye truſt in lying words that
" cannot profit. Will ye ſteal, murder, and commit
" adultery, and ſwear falſly, and burn incenſe unto
" Baal, and walk after other gods, whom ye know
" not: and come and ſtand before me in this houſe,
" which is called by my name, and ſay, we are deli-
" vered to do all theſe abominations?" What greater impudence can there be, than to worſhip GOD devoutly, and to live wickedly? this is to declare that we mock GOD under a pretence of ſerving him; or elſe that we believe that GOD whom we worſhip allows theſe abominations, and is pleaſed with them.

2. Others make this form of external devotion yet more complete, by a curious and nice regard to the modes and circumſtances of performing the duties of religion. They are very punctual and exact in all their carriage and geſtures, as if they minded nothing elſe but the outward part of religion.

Not but that great humility and reverence does very well become men in their addreſſes to GOD; but then we muſt be ſure that this external reverance be a ſignification of the inward and real devotion of our minds. For if it be ſeparated from this, it is not devotion, but ſuperſtition; it is not " to worſhip GOD in ſpirit " and in truth," but in bodily ſhew and appearance only; not to honour the divine majeſty, but to fawn upon him and flatter him. And where men are very intent upon theſe things, and endeavour to outſtrip other people in voluntary expreſſions of outward devotion, it too often happens that ſuch perſons are deſtitute of the ſubſtance and reality of religion. They are like the formal complimenting ſort of people in civil converſation, who commonly have very little in them,

and

and notwithſtanding all their ſmooth outſide and ap- SERM.
pearance, they have neither that ſolidity nor ſincerity CCIV.
which is in many a plain ordinary man.

II. An orthodox profeſſion of the chriſtian faith. This is another form of religion, which the more knowing and inquiſitive ſort of men are apt to take up and reſt in. And this is that which in the jewiſh religion the apoſtle calls "a form of knowledge, "and of the truth in the law."

And this is good as far as it goes. But then it muſt not reſt only in the brain, but deſcend from thence upon the heart and life: otherwiſe a man may have this "form of godlineſs," and yet be "a denier of "the power of it." St. Paul puts this very caſe, that a man may have the theory and knowledge of religion, and yet if it do not produce the fruits of a good life, it is nothing worth, 1 Cor. xiii. 2. "Though I have "the gift of propheſy, and underſtand all myſteries, "and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, ſo "that I could remove mountains, and have no cha- "rity, I am nothing." And the reaſon is plain, becauſe the knowledge of religion is only in order to the practice of it; and an article or propoſition of faith is an idle thing, if it do not produce ſuch actions as the belief of ſuch a propoſition doth require.

There are many perſons in the world very ſolicitous abou an orthodox belief, and mightily concerned to know what the ſcriptures, but eſpecially what the councils and fathers, have declared in ſuch a matter; and they are nice and ſcrupulous in theſe things, even to the utmoſt punctilios, and will with a moſt unchriſtian paſſion contend for the chriſtian faith: and yet perhaps all this while they can allow themſelves in plain ſins, and in the practice of ſuch things as are

SERM. CCIV. in ſcripture as clearly forbidden to be done, as any thing is there commanded to be believed. Whereas religion does not conſiſt ſo much in nicety and ſubtilty of belief, as in integrity and innocency of life; and the trueſt and moſt orthodox perſuaſion in matters of religion, is but a mere form and image, if it be not accompanied with an anſwerable practice; yea like the image preſented to Nebuchadnezzar in his dream, "whoſe head was of fine gold, but the legs and feet "were iron and clay."

Not but that a right belief is of great concernment in religion; but then this belief muſt be proſecuted into the proper and genuine conſequences of it upon our lives: if it be not, it is unhappy for men that they believe ſo well, when they live ſo ill. The devils have a right faith, St. James tells us, "they believe and "tremble." And indeed none have ſo much reaſon to tremble, as thoſe who believe the principles of religion, and yet are conſcious to themſelves that they live contrary to them; becauſe of all perſons in the world they are the moſt inexcuſable.

III. Another form of religion which many take upon them is enthuſiaſm, and pretence to inſpiration. And this is a very glorious form, which is apt to dazzle and amuſe the ignorant, becauſe they know not what to make of it. It ſeems to be ſomething ſtrange and extraordinary, and yet 'tis nothing but what every man that has confidence enough may pretend to.

There is no chriſtian doubts but that the SPIRIT of GOD hath heretofore inſpired men in an extraordinary manner, and that he may do ſo again when he pleaſes. But ſince the great and ſtanding revelation of the goſpel, we have reaſon not to be raſh in giving heed to ſuch pretences. If thoſe who pretend to in-

ſpiration declare nothing but what is revealed in the goſpel already, their inſpiration is needleſs; if they declare any thing contrary thereto, we are ſufficiently cautioned againſt them; if any thing beſides the revelation of the goſpel, but not contrary to it, then we are to expect what evidence they bring for their inſpiration. For GOD does not inſpire men for their own ſakes, but for the ſake of others; and another man's inſpiration is nothing to me, unleſs he can ſatisfy me that he is inſpired. For either I muſt believe every one that pretends to inſpiration, or thoſe only that can make good their pretence. Not every one, for then I yield up myſelf to the mercy of every confident man, to lead me into what deluſions he pleaſes. If I believe only thoſe who are able to make good this pretence, then am I in no great danger; for nothing leſs than a miracle can give me reaſonable aſſurance of another man's inſpiration; and I think few or none of our modern enthuſiaſts have ſo much as pretended to miracles. So that this form of religion is calculated only to impoſe upon the ignorant, but ſignifies little among the ſteady and conſiderate ſort of people. SERM CCIV.

Nay if this pretence were real, yet it may be no more than a form of religion. For the apoſtle ſuppoſes that men may have the gift of propheſy, and yet want charity, without which they are nothing. And our SAVIOUR tells us, that many ſhall plead at the day of judgment, "have we not propheſied in thy "name, and in thy name caſt out devils, and in thy "name done many wonderful works?" and yet theſe very perſons for all this may be "workers of iniquity," and ſuch as our LORD will bid "to depart from him."

IV. A great external ſhew of mortification.

This the Phariſees of old did much applaud themſelves

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ſelves in, they "faſted twice a week." And this is ſtill a great part of the religion of many in the romiſh church; they impoſe ſtrict penalties and corporal ſeverities upon themſelves; abſtain from ſeveral ſorts of meats and drinks, watch and afflict their bodies with ſeveral ſorts of rigours: whereas one ſevere reſolution of a good life well proſecuted, is a thouſand times better than all this.

For experience ſhews us, that men may be very ſevere to their bodies, and yet favourable to their luſts. The Phariſees indeed "faſted often," but they were ravenous in another kind, "they devoured widows "houſes." It is poſſible that men may kill themſelves by corporal auſterities, and yet never mortify one luſt; they may ſubmit to a thouſand penances, and yet never truly repent of one ſin; they may turn pilgrims, and go as far as Jeruſalem to viſit our SAVIOUR's ſepulchre, and yet never "know the power of his death."

Faſting may be a good inſtrument of religion, if it be diſcreetly uſed; and as it may be uſed, there may be no religion in it. But as for thoſe other kind of ſeverities they are abſurd and ſuperſtitious, and taken up upon a great miſtake of the nature of GOD; as if he were never well pleaſed, but when we do ſomething very diſpleaſing to ourſelves; as if he were extremely delighted in the miſery and torment of his creatures; and to be cruel and unmerciful to ourſelves, were the only way to move his compaſſion towards us.

Theſe are barbarous and heatheniſh conceits of GOD; and the abſurd practices grounded upon them are no where recommended to us in ſcripture, nor have any example there, but only in Baal's prieſts, who lanced and cut themſelves, believing that to be a good way to incline their gods to hear them. Theſe

are

are voluntary ſuperſtitions, which GOD hath required at no man's hands. And no wiſe man can doubt, but that he that really mortifies his luſts, and ſubdues his paſſions, may be a good man, though he never whipt himſelf in all his life; and that he that lives ſoberly, and righteouſly, and godly, may juſtly be accounted religious, without turning vagrant, and rambling idly up and down the world. Theſe are ſuch forms of religion as can have no eſteem and reputation, but in a very ſuperſtitious church and age. SERM. CCIV.

V. An imperfect repentance, and partial reformation.

By an imperfect repentance, I mean a trouble and ſorrow for ſin, without the forſaking of it, and the amendment of our lives; or when, if men do reform in ſome things they continue in the love and practice of other ſins. This is not true repentance; for he that hath truly repented, is heartily troubled for all his offences againſt GOD, and reſolved not to commit the like again; but he that retains any luſt, and allows himſelf in the practice of it, is not troubled that he hath offended GOD, but hath left his ſins for ſome other reaſon. For whatever arguments and conſiderations reſpecting GOD will move a man to quit any one luſt, ought upon the ſame account to prevail with him to abandon all. So that whatever trouble and ſorrow a man may pretend for his ſins, there is no ſurer ſign of an inſincere repentance, than if after this he continue in the habitual practice of any known ſin.

VI. The appearance and oſtentation of ſome particular grace and virtue.

A man may be moved by the inclination of his nature, or upon ſome intereſt and deſign, to the practice

SERM. CCIV. of ſome particular virtue. Some are tender and compaſſionate in their nature, and that excites them to charity; others of quiet and eaſy diſpoſitions, and that makes them patient, and meek, and peaceable; others aſſume one or more virtuous qualities out of vain-glory, or to ſerve ſome other intereſt. The Phariſees were much in giving alms, becauſe this is a piece of religion univerſally applauded and well ſpoken of; and therefore though they omitted many other neceſſary parts of religion, yet they were ſo cunning that they would not be defective in this; not out of regard to GOD, but themſelves and their own reputation. For, as our SAVIOUR obſerves, they did their alms with ſuch circumſtances of vain-glory as quite blaſted the glory of them. "They cauſed a trumpet to be ſound-"ed before them in the ſynagogues and in the ſtreets, "that they might be ſeen of men," and have glory of them.

Now though the exerciſe of every grace and virtue be materially a ſubſtantial part of religion, yet the practice of one virtue with the neglect of others, is a ſhrewd ground of ſuſpicion that it is not virtue but deſign, that it is not religion but intereſt which prompts men to it. For if it were religion, and done with regard to GOD, the very ſame reaſon would oblige them to all other parts of their duty as well as that.

VII. A great zeal for ſome particular party, or opinions, or circumſtances of religion.

This form is frequently aſſumed, becauſe men find the greateſt ſhelter and protection under it. He that declares zealouſly for a party or opinion, and is fierce and eager againſt thoſe that oppoſe it, ſeldom fails to gain the reputation of a religious and godly man; becauſe

becauſe he hath the vote of the whole party, and a great number to cry him up. And if he be guilty of any miſcarriage, unleſs it be very groſs and viſible, he ſhall never want thoſe that will apologize for him, and be ready to vindicate him at all turns. Either they will not believe what is reported of him, but impute it to malice; or they will extenuate it, and aſcribe it to humane infirmity: but ſtill they cannot but think he is a religious man, becauſe he is ſo zealous for that which they eſteem to be ſo conſiderable a part of religion. Nay ſuch is the horrible partiality and injuſtice of parties, that a very bad man that appears zealous for their way, ſhall eaſily gain the eſteem of a holy and religious man, though he have many viſible and notorious faults; though he be paſſionate and ill-natur'd, cenſorious and uncharitable, cruel and oppreſſive, ſordid and covetous; when another who quietly and without any noiſe and buſtle minds the ſubſtantial parts of religion, and is truly devoted towards GOD, juſt and peaceable, and charitable towards men; meek and humble, and patient, and friendly even to thoſe that differ from him, ſhall hardly eſcape being cenſured for a lukewarm, formal, moral man, deſtitute of the grace of GOD and of "the power of godlineſs." SERM. CCIV.

So likewiſe zeal for or againſt indifferent circumſtances of religion, is another "form of godlineſs" which many appear in. And commonly ſuch perſons, the more deſtitute they are of true piety and virtue, the greater ſtir they keep about theſe things, that they may ſeem to be ſomething in religion; juſt like thoſe, who being conſcious to themſelves that they are defective in true and uſeful learning, that they may not ſeem to be ſo, are always troubleſome with the ſhreds and ends of it.

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Now the indifferent circumſtances of religion are things which no man ought to have the face to trouble himſelf about, that neglects the weighty and ſubſtantial duties of it. No man that hath "a beam in his "own eye," ought to be concerned for "the mote "that is in his brother's eye." Indeed he that is careful of the main parts of religion, may and ought to be concerned for the other in their due place, ſo far as the order and decency of GOD's worſhip, and obedience to authority, and the peace of chriſtians is concerned in them. But to place all religion in a zeal for or againſt theſe things, is one of the thinneſt and ſlighteſt forms of religion.

VIII. Sillineſs and freakiſhneſs, and either a pretended or real ignorance in the common affairs and concernments of humane life.

This may ſeem at firſt hearing to be a very odd form of religion, and indeed ſo it is; yet in ſeveral religions, men have appeared in it with great applauſe and acceptance. Among the Turks idiots and madmen are mightily reverenced, it being always taken for granted that they are inſpired. And among the papiſts, the moſt eminent of their ſaints, if their legends do not belye them, eſpecially St. Francis, and St. Dominick, are magnified ſcarcely for any other reaſon, but for ſaying and doing the moſt ſilly and ridiculous things. What can be imagined more fooliſh and fantaſtical than St. Francis's ſtripping himſelf of his clothes and running about naked? than his frequent preaching to the birds, and beaſts, and fiſhes? was ever any thing more nauſeouſly ridiculous, than his picking up the lice which were beaten off his clothes, and putting them in his boſom? which is magnified in him as a profound piece of humility; as if naſtineſs

neſs were a chriſtian grace. Theſe and many more ſuch freaks which are related in his life as inſtances of his great ſanctity, ſerve to no other purpoſe, but to render religion ridiculous to any man of common ſenſe. As if to be "a ſpiritual man, and a mere natural," were all one, and as if this were a good conſequence, that a man cannot chooſe but be very knowing in religion, becauſe he is very ſilly in all other things; and muſt needs have abundance of grace, becauſe he hath no wit. It is pity it ſhould be ſo, but I am afraid it is too true, that the greateſt miſchiefs that have been done to the world, have been done by ſilly well-meaning men. SERM. CCIV.

Laſtly, great noiſe and talk about religion.

This is as empty a form as any of the reſt, and yet this does ſtrangely pleaſe and ſatisfy a great many. If a man do but mix ſomething of religion with all his diſcourſes, and be often ſpeaking of GOD and heavenly things, this paſſeth for a more than ordinary character of a religious man. And many deceive themſelves with it, they have talk'd of religion ſo long, till they believe they have it.

Not but that this is a good thing, provided it be order'd with diſcretion and humility, and be not forc'd and affected, impertinent and troubleſome. But then we muſt have a great care that other things be anſwerable. Our lives muſt juſtify our godly talk, and our actions muſt give weight to our words; for nothing is more odious, than a religious and good diſcourſe from the mouth of a bad man. This made our SAVIOUR ſo full of indignation againſt the Scribes and Phariſees, they were not what they appeared to be in their diſcourſe and outward garb. "They ſaid and did not," therefore he compares them to "whited walls and painted ſepulchres,

that

SERM. CCIV. "that were beautiful indeed without, but within were "full of all uncleanneſs and rottenneſs."

'Tis true indeed, that "out of the abundance of "the heart the mouth ſpeaketh;" if religion be within, it will appear in mens words as well as actions; this is a fire that will break out: but the beſt men are very modeſt, and make little noiſe, do nothing out of oſtentation and to be taken notice of, and had rather "refrain from good words," than to make an unſeaſonable ſhew of religion.

Speech is intended to ſignify the inward ſenſe of mens minds, but it does not always do ſo; men may be full of religious talk, when there is nothing of religion in their hearts, nothing anſwerable in their lives; men may ſpeak like angels, and yet do like devils.

Therefore let no man deceive himſelf, or think to deceive others with this appearance of religion: for let men talk never ſo piouſly, every conſiderate man knows that there is more of true religion in one good action, than in a thouſand good words.

And thus I have done with the firſt thing, viz. wherein a form of religion doth conſiſt.

Secondly, wherein "the power of godlineſs" doth conſiſt. And becauſe it is very material to be rightly informed in this, I will reduce the ſeveral particulars to theſe four general heads.

I. A due ſenſe of GOD, and ſuitable affections towards him.

II. A ſincere and diligent uſe of the means and inſtruments of religion.

III. A firm and ſteady reſolution of well-doing.

IV. As the proper and genuine effect of all theſe, the practice of a good life, in the ſeveral parts and inſtances of it.

I. A

I. A due ſenſe of GOD, and ſuitable affections to- SERM. CCIV.
wards him. This is the principle and fountain of all religion, from whence all actions of piety and goodneſs do ſpring.

Under this I comprehend a lively ſenſe of GOD's being; which the apoſtle tells us is fundamentally neceſſary to all religion, "he that cometh to GOD muſt "believe that he is." This is the great ſpring of all religious motions, and of our dependence upon him, the lively ſenſe whereof will make us humble and thankful, and teach us "to acknowledge him in all "our ways," and to refer all our concernments to him; and of our ſubjection to him, which will make us obedient to his laws, and ſubmiſſive to his pleaſure; nothing being more reaſonable than that he that gave us our lives ſhould have the entire government and diſpoſal of them; than that he that made us what we are, ſhould command us what we ſhould do. In ſhort, this comprehends faith in GOD, or a readineſs to aſſent to what he reveals, with the fear and the love of GOD, which are the great principles of religion.

II. A ſincere and diligent uſe of the means and inſtruments of religion, ſuch as prayer, reading, and hearing the word of GOD, and receiving the ſacraments. Theſe are the means which GOD hath appointed for the improving of us in holineſs and goodneſs; and we ſincerely uſe theſe means, when we really aim at this end; when we pray, and read, and hear, and meditate on GOD's word, and receive the ſacraments, that we may truly become better, more holy and virtuous in all manner of converſation; and do not reſt in the uſe of theſe means, as if a man were a religious and good man, becauſe he prays often, and every day reads the bible, and goes to all the ſermons he

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he can hear of, and takes all occaſions to receive the ſacrament. The life of religion does not conſiſt in the bare uſe of theſe, but in the real efficacy of them upon our lives. It is a very good caution which St. John gives us, "be not deceived, he that doth righ-"teouſneſs is righteous, even as he is righteous," 1 John iii. 6. Men are apt to impoſe upon themſelves, as if they could be righteous, and approve themſelves to GOD, upon ſome other terms, whereas only "they "that fear GOD, and work righteouſneſs, are ac-"cepted with him."

I do not ſpeak this to undervalue the exerciſes of religion, but to inform men of the true nature and deſign of them. Be as diligent as thou wilt in the exerciſes of piety and devotion, but be ſincere in the uſe of thoſe means; do not ſatisfy thyſelf in the performance of thoſe duties, unleſs thou find the effect of them upon thy heart and life, always remembring that "not the hearers of the word, but the doers of it "are bleſſed;" that "the prayer, and all the ſacri-"fices of the wicked are an abomination to the "LORD."

III. A firm and ſteady reſolution of well-doing. This is the reſult of a true and ſincere repentance, and the great principle of a new life; and if it be firm and ſtedfaſt, it will derive its influence into all our actions; but if it be wavering and inconſiſtent, it is only the occaſion of a religious mood and fit, but not the principle of a religious ſtate. Therefore it concerns us to ſtrengthen this principle, and to be true to it, when we have once taken it up; for whenever we quit it, we break looſe from GOD and religion at once, and caſt ourſelves back into a much more dangerous ſtate than we were in before.

There

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There is no doubt, but that the devil and our own corrupt hearts will make many aſſaults upon ſuch a reſolution, and raiſe all their batteries againſt it, becauſe it is our main fort, and the great ſecurity of our ſouls, and ſo long as we maintain that, we are ſafe; and therefore it had need be a mighty reſolution that is able to ſtand out againſt ſuch oppoſition.

But what are we that we ſhould take up ſuch a reſolution, and what is our ſtrength? We are weak and "unſtedfaſt as water, reeds ſhaken with the "wind; we are not ſufficient of ourſelves, as of "ourſelves, for any thing that is good; the way of "man is not in himſelf, nor is it in man that walks "to direct his ſteps:" but we have a greater ſtrength than our own to rely upon, and greater than that of any adverſe power that can ſet itſelf againſt us; we have GOD on our ſide, and the aſſiſtance of his grace to back and fortify theſe holy reſolutions; ſo that we have no reaſon to deſpair of ſucceſs and victory, if we be not wanting to our ſelves; for "GOD's grace is ſufficient for us; "greater is he that is in us, than he that is in the "world."

IV. And laſtly, which is the proper and genuine effect of all theſe, the practice of a holy and virtuous life in all the parts and inſtances of it. And unleſs this effect be produced, we want the ſureſt evidence of the former: for it is not credible, that that man hath a due ſenſe of GOD, and pious affections towards him, or does ſincerely exerciſe himſelf in the duties of religion, or is firmly reſolved in well-doing, who does not ſhew forth effects of all this in a good converſation. Thus St. James reaſons, chap. iii. 13.

"Who

SERM. CCIV. "Who is a wiſe man, and endued with know-
"ledge amongſt you?" that is, inſtructed in the chriſtian knowledge, in the heavenly wiſdom; "let
"him ſhew forth out of a good converſation his
"works."

So that herein the power of godlineſs doth viſibly appear, in the courſe of a good life; and 'tis the very deſign of the apoſtle in this chapter to declare this to us, as will appear to any one that conſiders the deſcription here given of thoſe perſons, who under a ſhew of religion "denied the power
"of it;" they were ſuch as notwithſtanding all their pretences to godlineſs, allowed themſelves in ſeveral vices, and luſts, and paſſions, and were deſtitute of the virtues of a good life, they were ſelfiſh, and covetous, and vain-glorious, and proud, evil-ſpeakers, diſobedient to parents, unthankful to their benefactors, filthy and impure, treacherous, heady, conceited, ſenſual and voluptuous; ſo that whatever appearance of godlineſs they made, they were almoſt as bad as could be imagined; there is hardly a fuller catalogue of ſins to be met with in the bible: beſides that all theſe vices are ſuch as are plain and evident in the lives of men.

So that upon the whole matter, is is very clear wherein the apoſtle mainly places the power of godlineſs, namely, in the real effects of religion, ſuch as are the mortifying our luſts, and ſubduing of our paſſions, the government of our tongues, and the ſeveral virtues of a good life.

1. In the mortifying of our luſts, the luſts of intemperance and uncleanneſs, covetouſneſs, and ambition. He that is a ſlave to any of theſe, his religion is but a form, how glorious a ſhew ſoever it may

may make. "Fleſhly luſts war againſt the ſoul," and will finally ruin it. Covetouſneſs and pride are enmity to GOD. "GOD reſiſts the proud afar off, "and the covetous man the LORD abhors." SERM. CCIV.

2. In the ſubduing of our paſſions, wrath, hatred, malice, envy and revenge. They are the very nature and properties of the devil, and diſpoſitions as contrary to GOD, as light is to darkneſs; therefore whoever allows himſelf in theſe, whatever pretences he makes to religion, is really a bad man. This St. John tells us is a plain caſe, 1 John iii. 10. "Whoſoever doth not righteouſneſs, is not of GOD, "neither he that loveth not his brother." James iii. 13, 14. "But if ye have bitter envying and ſtrife in "your hearts, glory out, and lie not againſt the "truth," that is, do not pretend to be religious; "this wiſdom deſcendeth not from above, but is "earthly, ſenſual, deviliſh."

3. In the government of our tongues. This is a great effect of religion, to "keep our tongues from "ſpeaking evil." from backbiting and ſlandering, and cenſuring, and reviling, from profane ſwearing and curſing, lewd and filthy talking. When mens tongues run out into theſe diſorders, it is a ſign that they are not under the government of religion, and that the fear of GOD hath not ſeized upon their hearts; for "out of the abundance of the heart "the mouth ſpeaketh." So St. James tells us, chap. i. 26. "If any man among you ſeem to be "religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but de-"ceiveth his own heart; this man's religion is "vain." And on the contrary, it is a good ſign that religion hath ſome power over men, when it reſtrains them in this kind. So the ſame apoſtle tells

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tells us, chap. iii. 2. "If any man offend not in "word, the ſame is a perfect man."

4. In the ſeveral virtues of a good life, in oppoſition to theſe and all other vices; ſuch as are truth and juſtice, humility and meekneſs, patience and contentedneſs with our condition, peaceableneſs and charity to thoſe that are in want and neceſſity, a readineſs to forgive our enemies, and an univerſal love and kindneſs to all men. I have not time to recommend theſe particularly to you, the ſcripture does it frequently and fully, telling us that theſe are "the "will of GOD" and "the divine nature, the new "creature, pure religion and undefiled, the wiſdom "that is from above, the fruits of the SPIRIT," the proper and genuine effects of true piety, the ſenſible and ſubſtantial evidences of our love to GOD, the things wherein "the kingdom of GOD conſiſts," and that "he that in theſe things ſerveth CHRIST, "is accepted of GOD and approved of men;" but he that neglects theſe, whatever "form of godlineſs" he puts on, is "a denier of the power of it." "In "this the children of GOD are manifeſt, and the "children of the devil, he that doth not righteouſ-"neſs, is not of GOD.

Thus I have done with the ſecond thing I propounded to ſpeak to, namely, wherein "the power "of godlineſs" conſiſts. There are two other particulars remaining, which I ſhall reſerve to a farther opportunity.

SER-

# SERMON CCV.

## Of the form, and the power of godlineſs.

2 TIM. iii. 5.

*Having a form of godlineſs, but denying the power thereof.*

THE third thing propounded, was to give ſome marks, whereby we may know when theſe are ſeparated, when there is a form of religion without the power of it. SERM. CCV. The ſecond ſermon on this text.

I need not inſiſt long upon this, becauſe this will in a good meaſure appear by the account I have given of theſe two ſeverally, of the form of religion, and of the power of it; for he that conſiders wherein each of theſe conſiſts, will eaſily judge when they are ſeparated. But yet, that we may be ſure not to miſtake in a matter of ſo great concernment, I will inſtance in two or three groſs and palpable characters of this, and they are ſo comprehenſive as to contain moſt of the reſt.

I. He hath only "a form of godlineſs," who minds merely the external part of religion, without any inward ſenſe of it.

II. He that uſeth only the means of religion, without regard to the end and effect of it.

III. He that is groſly and knowingly defective in the practice of any part of it.

I. He hath only "a form of godlineſs," who minds merely the external part of religion, without any inward ſenſe of it. He that worſhips and ſerves GOD outwardly, but hath no inward reverence and eſteem for him, who cares not, ſo the work be

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done, and the duty performed with what heart and affection he does it. This is a mere carcaſe of religion, which is ſo far from being pleaſing to GOD, that it is intolerably offenſive to him; for though it be outwardly an honour done to GOD, yet really and in truth it is a contempt of him.

And yet it is to be feared, that this is a religion which many in the world chooſe and content themſelves with. They can ſerve GOD an hour together, and mention his name an hundred times, without ever thinking of him, or being affected with the buſineſs they are about: nay, which is worſe, this is a religion which a great part of the world uſe, and cannot help it; I mean all thoſe who ſerve GOD in an unknown tongue. For how is it poſſible their minds and hearts can be concerned in a ſervice they do not underſtand? they may poſſibly have a devout mind in general; but they cannot exerciſe any acts of devotion in the particular ſervice they are engaged in. The beſt of men are apt enough to let their thoughts ſwerve, and go aſtray from GOD when they are worſhipping of him, though they underſtand the ſervice they are about, but when they do not underſtand, it is impoſſible their minds and thoughts ſhould go along with it, and be concerned in what is done. This is properly, and in the ſtrict ſenſe of the word, μόρφωσις εὐσεβείας, "an image of religion and devotion, without any life or ſenſe." And if to have our bodies put in a devout poſture, to move our hands, and lips, and eyes, without underſtanding the ſervice we offer to GOD, may be accounted worſhipping of him, this is a ſervice that may be performed by puppets as well as men. "GOD is a Spirit; and they that worſhip him, muſt

" worſhip him in ſpirit and in truth." " In ſpirit SERM.
" and in truth," in oppoſition to a mere bodily ſer- CCV.
vice, and external ſhew of devotion. GOD who is a Spirit, muſt be worſhipped with our ſpirits. He expects from reaſonable creatures a reaſonable ſervice, and that ſervice only is reaſonable, which is dictated by our underſtandings, and accompanied with our hearts and affections: and to worſhip him otherwiſe, is to offer a ſacrifice without a heart, it is " to offer the lame and the blind in ſacrifice," which would be an affront to our governor, much more to the great king of the world. Whatever we do in the ſervice of GOD, we muſt " do it heartily as to " the LORD," becauſe he is " the ſearcher of hearts, " and all things are open and naked to the eyes of " him with whom we have to do."

II. He hath only " a form of godlineſs," that uſeth only the means of religion, without regard to the end and effect of them. A man may exerciſe his underſtanding in the ſervice of GOD, and his heart may be touched, and his affections moved in prayer, and at the hearing of GOD's word, and the receiving of the ſacrament, and yet this may be but a form of religion, if it go no farther. If we do not forſake thoſe ſins we confeſs to GOD, and daily beg the pardon of; if we do not truly and heartily endeavour that we may live godly, and righteous, and ſober lives, as well as pray that we may do ſo; if the counſels and directions of GOD's word have not an influence upon our lives; if we be not awed by the threatnings of it to leave our ſins, and encouraged by the promiſes of it " to " cleanſe ourſelves from all filthineſs of fleſh and " ſpirit, and to perfect holineſs in the fear of GOD;" we uſe the means of religion to no purpoſe, and we

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diſcredit the inſtitutions of GOD, becauſe we make no proficiency under them. We are juſt like the diſciples of thoſe formal profeſſors of religion, whom the apoſtle deſcribes after the text, who are "ever "learning, but never able to come to the knowledge "of the truth." It ſeems they uſed the means of inſtruction, and continued to uſe them, "they were "ever learning;" but all this while they were under the dominion of ſin, and the power of their luſts; "they were laden with ſins, and led away "with divers luſts," and ſo they never attained to that which the apoſtle calls "the knowledge of the "truth," that is, ſuch a knowledge of the doctrine of CHRIST, as is accompanied with a ſuitable practice, according to that of our SAVIOUR, John viii. 31. "If ye continue in my word," that is, if ye practiſe my doctrine, "then are ye my diſciples "indeed, and ye ſhall know the truth, and the truth "ſhall make you free." Then men come to "the "knowledge of the truth," when "it frees them" from the ſlavery of ſin. If our knowledge have not this effect, it ſignifies nothing, and does not deſerve the name of knowledge, becauſe "we know no-"thing in religion as we ought to know." 1 John ii. 2, 3. ſpeaking of the knowledge of CHRIST, "hereby do we know that we know him, if we "keep his commandments. He that ſaith he knows "him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a "liar, and the truth is not in him."

III. He hath only a form of religion, who is groſly and knowingly defective in the practice of any part of it. And this ſort of perſons are thoſe, whom the apoſtle particularly intended here in the text. For ſuch were they whom he deſcribes by this character, that

that " they had a form of godlineſs, but denied the SERM.
" power of it." Under the garb of religion which CCV.
they had put on, they were groſly faulty in their lives and practice, and mainly defective in many of the eſſential duties of chriſtianity; they were ſelfiſh and covetous, vain-glorious and deſpiſers of others, calumniators and ſlanderers, undutiful to their ſuperiors, and unthankful to thoſe that had obliged them, fierce and ill-natured, treacherous and falſe to their word, perſecutors of thoſe that were good, filthy and ſenſual; not that every one of them had all theſe vices, they are ſo many and groſs, that no cloke of religion could have covered them; but the apoſtle means that among thoſe that made an empty profeſſion of religion, theſe vices were viſible, ſome of them in one, and ſome in another. And the living in any one of theſe, or any other of the like nature, is inconſiſtent with chriſtianity. The power of religion appears chiefly in the ſubduing of theſe luſts, and in the exerciſe and practice of thoſe graces and virtues which are contrary to theſe. Here the very heart and life of religion lies, and theſe are the veins in which it runs; and if there be a failure in any of theſe main virtues of a chriſtian life, it is a plain caſe, that we are deſtitute of the power of religion, and do only make a vain and empty ſhew of it. St. James inſtanceth, as one would think, in none of the groſſeſt and moſt conſiderable of theſe, the government of our tongue, and yet he peremptorily determines, that the want of this virtue is enough to deſtroy all a man's other pretences to religion, chap. i. 26. " if any man among you " ſeem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but " deceives his own heart; this man's religion is vain."

So that by the practice or neglect of theſe main virtues of a good life, every man may examine and judge

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himſelf. This is the rule which our SAVIOUR gives to try the religion of men by, Matth. vii. 16, 17. "Ye ſhall know them by their fruits. Do men gather "grapes of thorns, or figs of thiſtles? Even ſo every "good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt "tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot "bring forth evil fruit; neither can a corrupt tree "bring forth good fruit. Wherefore by their fruits "ye ſhall know them." The force of which reaſoning is this, that every tree bringeth forth fruit according to its nature, and by the kind and quality of the fruit you may certainly know what the tree is. So by the good or bad actions of mens lives, you may know by what principle they are governed, whether the fear of GOD, or the love of ſin bear ſway in them; the courſe of their lives will diſcover the bent and inclination of their minds, whatever ſhew and profeſſion they may make to the contrary. "By their "fruits ye ſhall know them. Not every one that "ſaith unto me, LORD, LORD," (there is ſome profeſſion of religion) "ſhall enter into the kingdom "of heaven: but he that doth the will of my FA-"THER which is in heaven;" (there is the power of it.)

I would by no means encourage men to be over cenſorious toward others, there is too much of that ſpirit already in the world; but it is not amiſs that men ſhould be ſtrict and ſevere toward themſelves. And would to GOD men would bring themſelves to this teſt, and examine the truth and ſincerity of their religion, not by the leaves of an outward profeſſion, but by the fruits it produceth in their lives. Every man that will but take the pains to look into himſelf, and to obſerve his own actions, may by comparing the

the temper of his mind, and the general courſe of life and practice, with the rules and precepts of religion, eaſily diſcern what power and efficacy religion hath on him. A man may as certainly know himſelf, and make as ſure a judgment of his ſtate and condition toward GOD in this way, as "a tree is known "by its fruit." Therefore let us not flatter ourſelves: for if we indulge any luſt, or irregular paſſion in our ſouls, and do not endeavour to mortify and ſubdue it; if we allow ourſelves in any vicious practice in our lives; we do but deceive ourſelves with an opinion of our godlineſs, and whatever ſhew and appearance we may make of religion, we are certainly deſtitute of the power of it. True religion and godlineſs is an uniform principle, which inclines a man to all holineſs and goodneſs, and does bias him againſt all known ſin and wickedneſs. All the motives and arguments of religion, and all conſiderations of piety are levelled againſt all ſin, and tend to engage men to univerſal holineſs of life. *Bonum conſtat ex integris cauſis, ſed malum ex quolibet defectu:* the practice of any one vice is enough to render a man a bad man; but there muſt be the concurrence of all the parts of religion and virtue, to make a man good. SERM. CCV.

I proceed to the fourth thing I propounded, which was to ſhew, that "a form of godlineſs," without "the power of it," is inſignificant to all the great ends and purpoſes of religion. The great ends that men can reaſonably propound to themſelves in being religious, are theſe three.

I. The pleaſing of GOD.

II. The peace and tranquillity of our own minds.

III. The ſaving of our ſouls. Now a form of godlineſs, without the power of it, is unavailable to all theſe purpoſes.

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I. To the pleaſing of GOD. External devotion, and exerciſing ourſelves in the means and inſtruments of religion, and the profeſſion of a right belief, or any other form of religion whatſoever, do not recommend any man to the divine favour and acceptance, without the real effects of religion in a good life: nay, ſo far is it from this, that all forms of religion, deſtitute of the life and power of it, are extremely odious and offenſive to him. Devotion in prayer without a holy life, is but a rude and troubleſome noiſe in the ears of the almighty. "The prayer of the wicked" is ſo far from being accepted, that it is "an abomina-"tion to him." He does not love to be invoked by unhallowed mouths, and to be praiſed by the workers of iniquity. Flattery is hateful to a wiſe man, much more to the infinitely wiſe GOD. He cannot endure that men ſhould lift up eyes to him "that are full of "adultery, and hands filled with violence and oppreſ-"ſion, and tread his courts with feet ready to ſhed "blood." It is an affront to GOD to be worſhipped by evil-doers, and to ſee men diligent in reading his word, and attending to his law, who break it every day. "Unto the wicked GOD ſaith, what haſt thou "to do to declare my ſtatutes, or that thou ſhouldſt "take my covenant in thy mouth, ſeeing thou hateſt "to be reformed, and caſteſt my words behind thy "back?" What GOD ſays of the ſacrifices of the Jews, offered to him by "a ſinful people, laden with "iniquity," may be applied to the worſhip of chriſtians who live wicked and abominable lives, Iſai. i. 11, 12, &c. "To what purpoſe is the multitude of "your ſacrifices unto me, ſaith the LORD? I am "full of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of "fed beaſts, and I delight not in the blood of bulls,

"or

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" or of lambs, or of he-goats. When ye come to ap-
" pear before me, who hath required this at your
" hands, to tread my courts? bring no more vain ob-
" lations. Incenſe is an abomination unto me: the new
" moons, and ſabbaths, and the calling of aſſemblies,
" I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the ſolemn
" meetings. Your new moons, and your appointed
" feaſts my ſoul hateth, they are a trouble unto me, I
" am weary to bear them. And when you ſpread forth
" your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea,
" when you make many prayers, I will not hear.
" Waſh you, make you clean, put away the evil of
" your doings from before mine eyes, ceaſe to do evil,
" learn to do well." This is that which GOD expects from us, the amendment and reformation of our lives, and without this all our religious addreſſes to him are nauſeous and abominable. GOD does hardly any where in ſcripture expreſs ſo great a deteſtation of the greateſt ſins, as he does of the devotion of wicked men. I will but bring one text more to this purpoſe, Iſa. lxvi. 3. " He that killeth an ox, is as if he ſlew
" a man: he that ſacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off
" a dog's neck: he that offereth an obligation, as if
" he offered ſwines blood: he that burneth incenſe, as
" if he bleſſed an idol." What is the reaſon of all theſe ſevere expreſſions? becauſe they were " the ſacri-
" fices of the wicked, of thoſe who had choſen their
" own ways, and whoſe ſoul delighted in their abo-
" minations;" they worſhipped GOD according to his will, but lived according to their own, and therefore they were to him no better than an aſſembly of murderers, and a church of idolatrous worſhippers: for this is falſe worſhip, to offer ſacrifices to GOD, and to devote ourſelves to the ſervice of our luſts.

II. Another

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II. Another end of religion is the peace and tranquillity of our own minds. And this is not to be attained upon true and laſting grounds, by any form of religion without the power of it. Men may delude themſelves with ſome falſe peace, and make a hard ſhift to ſtop the loud and vehement clamours of their conſcience; but the guilt of any vicious courſe of life will frequently recoil upon them, to diſturb and interrupt their peace, and to put out their falſe joy; their conſciences will ever and anon give them many ſecret girds and laſhes. For no man can knowingly live in the practice of any ſin, but he muſt be guilty to himſelf; and whoever is guilty, hath received a ſecret ſting into his heart, which is never to be taken out but by repentance, and a thorough reformation. GOD hath ſaid it, and I doubt not but every ſinner finds it true, "there is no peace to the wicked." Eſpecially when ſuch a man is ſeized upon by ſickneſs, and approaches in his thoughts near to eternity, then his drowſy conſcience awakes like a lion out of ſleep, full of rage and fierceneſs, and all his falſe peace and comfort vaniſheth. "For what is the hope of the hypo-"crite, when GOD comes to take away his ſoul?" It is, as Job elegantly expreſſes it, "like the ſpider's "web," artificially wrought, but miſerably weak, it can endure no ſtreſs, upon the leaſt touch it breaks and vaniſheth.

And this is no ſmall diſadvantage which a man that hath only the form of religion lies under, that in effect he loſeth all the pleaſure and ſatisfaction of religion; or if he fancy any hope or comfort to himſelf, it is built upon a falſe foundation, which when it is tried will endure no ſhock. This is the compariſon our SAVIOUR uſeth in this very caſe, Matth. vii. 26, 27.

"Every

" Every one that heareth theſe ſayings of mine, and SERM.
" doth them not (here is a form of godlineſs without CCV.
" the power of it) ſhall be likened to a fooliſh man,
" which built his houſe upon the ſand; and the rain
" deſcended, and the floods came, and the winds
" blew, and beat upon that houſe, and it fell, and
" great was the fall of it." But real and ſubſtantial religion is like "a houſe built upon a rock," which no tempeſt can overthrow. " Righteouſneſs, ſaith Solo-
" mon, Prov. x. 25. is an everlaſting foundation;" it is a continual ſpring of joy and peace. There is a certain unſpeakable contentment and delight ariſing from a good conſcience, and from the ſincere diſcharge of our duty, which a hypocrite is a ſtranger to, and is never admitted to the taſte of. Now what an uncomfortable thing is this, for a man to take the pains to ſeem to be religious, and yet to loſe the real pleaſure of religion!

III. The great end of all, of being religious, is the ſaving of our ſouls. And this end a mere form of religion will certainly miſs of. No external garb of religion will gain a man admiſſion into heaven; there is no getting in there in maſquerade, no prayers will then avail, though never ſo fervent and importunate. " Many ſhall ſay in that day, LORD, LORD,
" open unto us; and yet he will bid them depart from
" him." Though we had heard CHRIST himſelf preach, and had received the bleſſed ſacrament with him, yet this will not avail. So our SAVIOUR tells us, Luke xiii. 26. " Then ſhall they begin to ſay, we
" have eaten and drunken in thy preſence, and thou
" haſt taught in our ſtreets; and yet he will ſay unto
" them, I know not whence you are." 'Tis not a pretence to inſpiration, no, though it were juſtified by miraculous

SERM. CCV. miraculous gifts, that will then ſtand us in ſtead. "Many ſhall ſay in that day; LORD, LORD, have "we not propheſied in thy name, and in thy name "have caſt out devils, and in thy name have done "many wondrous works?" and yet theſe ſhall be rejected. Why, what ſhould be the reaſon of all this ſeverity? our SAVIOUR gives us a plain account, of it; becauſe they were "workers of iniquity." Under all theſe ſeveral maſks of religion, they were wicked in their lives.

'Tis not an orthodox faith, and the belief of all the articles of chriſtianity, that will ſave a man, without the works of a good life, Jam. ii. 14. "What doth "it profit a man, my brethren, though a man ſay "that he hath faith, and hath not works? can faith "ſave him? Thou believeſt there is one GOD; thou "doſt well; the devils believe" this too, but they are not ſo vain as to hope to be ſaved by this faith; no, they know the contrary, and that makes them fear and tremble. "Know then, O vain man, that faith "without works is dead. "Thou believeſt "in one "LORD JESUS CHRIST, that come down from "heaven to ſave us, that was conceived by the HOLY "GHOST, born of the virgin Mary, and became "man, that he might bring us to GOD; that ſuf"fered and died for our ſins, and roſe again for our "juſtification, and is aſcended into heaven, and ſit"teth at the right hand of GOD, the FATHER al"mighty, and from thence he ſhall come again at the "end of the world, to judge the quick and the dead;" thou doſt well to believe this: but if thou do not live accordingly, what will become of thee, when the SON of GOD ſhall come to judge the world? Then the great enquiry will be, how we have lived? what

good

good we have done? So our SAVIOUR repreſents the proceedings of that great day. "I was hungry, "and ye gave me no meat; I was thirſty, and ye "gave me no drink; naked, and ye clothed me not; "ſick and in priſon, and ye viſited me not:" therefore "depart ye curſed into everlaſting fire." So that it ſeems here the buſineſs will ſtick, upon the good and bad actions of mens lives, and accordingly ſentence ſhall be pronounced upon them. For "GOD will ren-"der to every man according to his works; to them "that by patient continuance in well-doing ſeek for "glory, and honour, and immortality; eternal life: "but to thoſe that obey not the truth, but obey un-"righteouſneſs; indignation and wrath, tribulation "and anguiſh upon every ſoul of man that doth evil, "of the Jew firſt, and alſo of the Gentile: but glory "and honour, and peace to every man that worketh "good, to the Jew firſt, and alſo to the Gentile:" for "not the hearers of the law are juſt before GOD, "but the doers of the law ſhall be juſtified." Still you ſee that 'tis "to the patient continuance in well-"doing, to the obeying of the truth, to the working "of righteouſneſs," that eternal life is promiſed: "and the wrath of GOD is threaten'd to them, that "obey unrighteouſneſs, to every ſoul of man that "doth evil. To the Jew firſt," why ſo? becauſe he had great advantage of coming to the knowledge of the truth, which is ſo much the greater aggravation of his wicked life, and makes his ſentence ſo much the heavier.

Indeed it ſhall be to men at the day of judgment likewiſe according to their faith, in a certain ſenſe, that is, according to the doctrine of the goſpel which they profeſs to believe, according to what our SA-

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VIOUR and his apoſtles have taught, that "the "workers of iniquity ſhall depart from him; that "without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the LORD;" and "if we live after the fleſh we ſhall die;" that "no whoremonger, nor adulterer, nor covetous, "nor unrighteous perſon, ſhall have any inheritance "in the kingdom of GOD, and of CHRIST." This we profeſs to believe, and according to theſe declarations GOD will proceed with men at the great day. And he that believes this, and yet goes on in an impiety and wickedneſs of life, though his faith will not juſtify him, yet GOD will juſtify his faith, and make it good, when "he ſhall judge the "world in righteouſneſs."

Thus you ſee plainly, that "a form of godlineſs "without the power," is inſignificant to all the great ends and purpoſes of religion; nay, he that takes up in a form, does not only loſe the advantages of religion; but he hath two great diſadvantages by it.

I. He hath the trouble of making a ſhew of religion, without the real benefit of it.

II. He incurs a heavier ſentence upon this very account.

But theſe with the application I ſhall refer to the next opportunity.

SER-

# SERMON CCVI.

## Of the form, and the power of godlineſs.

2 TIM. iii. 5.

*Having a form of godlineſs, but denying the power thereof.*

I Come now to ſhew, that he that take upon him a form of religion, without the power of it, doth not only loſe all the conſiderable advantages of religion, but he hath two great diſadvantages by it. SERM. CCVI. The third ſermon on this text.

I. He hath the trouble of making a ſhew and appearance of religion, without the real benefit of it.

II. He incurs a heavier ſentence upon this account, that he hath a form of religion, and yet is deſtitute of the power of it.

I. He hath the trouble of making a ſhew and appearance of religion, without the real benefits of it. And 'tis no ſmall trouble to perſonate and act a part well, it requires great art and attention, great guard and caution. That which men are prompted to by an inward principle, is natural and eaſy, it is done with pleaſure and delight; but whatever is artificial and counterfeit, is ſtiff and forc'd. *Nemo fictam perſonam diu ſuſtinere poteſt*, " no man can diſſemble always," one time or other he will be ſurpriſed and forget himſelf and let his maſk fall. A form of religion is a dry unpleaſant thing, and a continual burden to him that aſſumes it, and the more outwardly ſtrict and holy he is, he is the more inwardly guilty; his conſcience never ſtings and galls him more, than when he is playing the

SERM. CCV. the hypocrite with GOD and men: whereas a truly good man, when he employs himſelf in acts of religion, or juſtice, or charity, he doth it naturally, and hath a mighty ſatisfaction of mind in the doing of it, and if he were permitted to make his own choice, he would not do otherwiſe; but a hypocrite puts a force upon himſelf all the while, and acts againſt his nature and inclinations, every thing he does in religion goes againſt the grain, and becauſe it is unnatural muſt be uneaſy; his outward converſation and demeanour is ſet, and in a frame, he does not move as he would, but as he muſt, and the ſecret propenſions of his nature are under a continual reſtraint.

He hath indeed one advantage by his artificial garb, that he can more ſecurely over-reach and defraud others by his ſhew of godlineſs, while men are not aware of his diſſimulation. But this commonly does not laſt long, and only ſerves a man for a few turns; and when 'tis diſcovered, the man is loſt, and no body will truſt him. But ſuppoſe he could ſerve himſelf of religion this way for ſome conſiderable time, where is the advantage? it amounts to no more than this, that the man hath the opportunity of being a greater ſinner, of making himſelf more miſerable, and "treaſuring up to himſelf more "wrath againſt the day of wrath." So that he pays dear for all this in the end and iſſue, as well as in the way. He ſpends many a tedious hour in the ſervice of GOD, and the exerciſe of religion; more it may be than many do, who ſave their ſouls, and get to heaven. For as to the external part of religion, a hypocrite muſt do all that which a truly religious man does; he muſt frequent the church,

and

and make as much ſhew of devotion as the beſt; SERM. CCV.
nay, it may be he prays more, and faſts oftner, and is more buſy, and keeps a greater ſtir in the outward part of religion, than the ſincere chriſtian; for being conſcious to himſelf of his own hollowneſs and inſincerity in religion, he thinks himſelf obliged outwardly to over-act it in unſeaſonable and ſuperſtitious obſervances, and in all other arts of affected devotion; and when he goes abroad into the world, he is forced to lay great reſtraints upon himſelf, and to be continually gathering his cloke about him, as being afraid leſt any body ſhould ſpy what is under it. So much more troubleſome it is for any man to ſeem to be religious, than to be ſo indeed.

II. A mere form of religion does upon ſome accounts bring a man under a heavier ſentence, than if he were openly profane and irreligious. He that makes a ſhew of religion, flatters GOD, but all the while acts and deſigns againſt him: whereas the profane man deals plainly, and though he be a monſtrous and unnatural rebel, yet he is a fair and open enemy; and the kiſſes of a falſe friend are more hateful than the wounds of an open enemy. Upon this account it is that our SAVIOUR denounceth ſo many ſevere woes againſt the Scribes and Phariſees, becauſe they were wicked under a ſhew of religion. "Wo unto you Scribes and Phariſees, hy-"pocrites:" and when he would ſet forth the ſeverity of the LORD againſt the evil ſervant, Matth. xxiv. 51. he expreſſeth it thus, "he ſhall cut him "aſunder, and appoint him his portion with the "hypocrites; there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing "of teeth." As if the puniſhment of hypocrites,

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were the rule and ſtandard of the ſevereſt puniſhment. "He ſhall appoint him his portion with the hypocrites."

I will not deny but that a profane man is a worſe example to the world, and may do more miſchief upon that account: but the hypocrite is more miſchievous to himſelf, and of the two more odious to GOD, and ſometimes does more prejudice to religion by undermining it, than the other does by all his open aſſaults and batteries. GOD cannot endure to be affronted: but he hates to be mocked. So that upon this account, it is like to go harder with the formal profeſſors of religion, than with the open contemners of it.

And thus I have done with the four things I propounded to ſpeak to from theſe words; wherein "a "form of godlineſs" does conſiſt; wherein "the "power of it" lies; by what marks and characters we may know when theſe are ſeparated; and that "a form of religion" without "the power of "it," is inſignificant to all the great ends and purpoſes of religion; and not only ſo, but it is greatly to mens diſadvantage to aſſume "a form of godli-"neſs," if they be deſtitute of "the power of it."

All that now remains, is to draw ſome inferences from this diſcourſe by way of application; and they ſhall be theſe three.

Firſt, to take heed of miſtaking "the form of "religion, for the power of it."

Secondly, to take heed of being captivated and ſeduced by thoſe who have only "a form of godlineſs."

Thirdly, to perſuade men to mind the life, and power, and ſubſtance of religion.

Firſt, to take heed of miſtaking "the form of

" religion, for the power of it." The papiſts have almoſt confined the words religion and religious to cloiſters and monks; and they make a religious life to conſiſt in maſſes and ave-maries, and pater-noſters, in the obſervation of canonical hours, and the diſtinctions of meats and habits, in coarſe clothes, and a diſſembled poverty, and ſeveral bodily rigours and ſeverities. As if to make a man a religious and good man, it were neceſſary that he ſhould be dreſt fantaſtically, and in a great many indifferent things be different from other men. Nay, ſo far doth this ſuperſtition prevail, that a great many think that they ſhould hardly get to heaven without it, or that it will be very much for their advantage, if they be buried in the habit of a religious man: as if to be put in a monk's coul, would give a man the ſtart of other people at the reſurrection. But what reaſon is there that the name and title of religion ſhould be appropriated to theſe uſages? does the ſcripture any where conſtitute religion in theſe things, or confine it to them? are not theſe voluntary things, which GOD ties no man to? whence then come they to ſwallow up the name of religion, and to engroſs it to themſelves, as if they were the very life and ſoul of chriſtianity; when the great author of our religion JESUS CHRIST, and his bleſſed apoſtles, never ſpake one word of them? what an abuſe of language is this, to confine the name of religion to that which is not ſo much as any part of it!

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But the church of Rome is not alone guilty of this; among ourſelves it is very ordinary to miſtake " the form of godlineſs for the power," though the miſtake is not ſo groſs, as in thoſe particulars I have

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mentioned. How many are there, who talk as if "the power of godlineſs" conſiſted in nothing elſe but a daily taſk of devotion, in frequent hearing of ſermons, and a ſtrict obſervation of the LORD's-day. Theſe are very good things; but they are but "a form of godlineſs," and may be, and often are without "the power of it;" they are but the means and inſtruments of religion, but not the great end and deſign of it; that conſiſts in the renewing of our natures, and the reformation of our lives; "in righteouſneſs and true holineſs, in mortifying "the fleſh with the affections and luſts of it," ſuch as are "adultery, fornication, hatred, variance, "wrath, ſedition, envying, murder, drunkenneſs: "for they which do ſuch things, cannot inherit the "kingdom of GOD;" and in "the fruits of the "SPIRIT," ſuch as are "love, joy, peace, long-"ſuffering, gentleneſs, goodneſs, fidelity, meekneſs, "temperance," as the apoſtle reckons them up, Gal. v. 22. Theſe are real and ſenſible effects of religion; and the means of religion, if they be ſincerely uſed, do all tend to the begetting and increaſing of theſe in us: ſo that it is a groſs miſtake to talk of "the power of religion" without theſe. Whoever is deſtitute of theſe, whatever attainments in religion he may pretend to, is got no farther than "a form of godlineſs," he is not yet under the power of it. This is the firſt.

Secondly, let us be cautioned againſt being captivated and ſeduced by thoſe, who have only "a form "of godlineſs." This is the apoſtle's exhortation here in the text, "from ſuch turn away: for of this "ſort are they which creep into houſes, and lead "captive ſilly women." To the ſame purpoſe is

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our SAVIOUR's caution, Matth. vii. 15, 16. "Be- SERM. CCVI.
"ware of falſe prophets, which come to you in
"ſheeps clothing, but inwardly they are ravening
"wolves." And that we may know how to avoid them, our SAVIOUR bids us to obſerve their lives, "ye ſhall know them by their fruits." He does not bid us examine their opinions, and try their pretences to inſpiration; that is a thing many times above the capacity of the ordinary ſort of men; but their lives and actions are open to every man's view; and though it is poſſible men may counterfeit even in this, yet they ſeldom do it ſo exactly, as not to betray themſelves ſome time or other: however this of all other is the eaſieſt and ſureſt rule; "by their "fruits ye ſhall know them."

Therefore if any man pretend to any new diſcoveries in religion, beyond what is plainly revealed in ſcripture, though he appear in never ſo ſanctimonious a garb, be not moved with this: for "the power "of religion" does not conſiſt in any thing now to be diſcovered; but in thoſe things which are clearly contained in the word of GOD, in the precepts and directions, and in the motives and arguments to a good life; and whoever lives according to theſe, is in the beſt way to heaven that any man can put himſelf into; and he need not trouble himſelf about thoſe new lights and opinions, which in every age appear like comets, and glare a-while, and draw people to gaze upon them, and then vaniſh. And none are ſo much to be ſuſpected of "a form of religion" as thoſe who make frequent changes in it, and wander from one party and opinion to another. An outward form and ſhape is eaſily changed; it is that which a man ſhifts and puts off at pleaſure.

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Thirdly, to perſuade men to mind the power, and life, and ſubſtance of religion. It was the commendation of Socrates, the beſt of philoſophers, that he did *philoſophiam de cælo deducere*, "bring down philoſophy from heaven to earth," that is, from contemplation to practice, and from being an art of talking and diſputing to be an art of living. This I deſire may be the aim of all my diſcourſes, to inſtruct men in religion in order to the practice of it, to teach men to know GOD, in St. John's ſenſe, 1 John ii. 3. "Hereby we know that we know him, "if we keep his commandments." This is the great end and ſcope, to which all diſcourſes of religion ought to be levelled. It was a good ſaying of *Pacuvius*, *ego odi homines ignavâ operâ, & philoſophos ſententiâ*, "I hate men that are unactive in their "lives, and philoſophers in their opinions." Chriſtianity is the beſt philoſophy, and the moſt perfect inſtitution of life that ever the world was acquainted withal; and therefore it is much more odious to ſee men chriſtians in their profeſſion, and faulty and vicious in their lives; becauſe the very deſign of the chriſtian religion, is to give men a perfect and plain law and rule of life, and to enforce this law by the moſt powerful and prevailing arguments. So that as Tully ſays concerning the philoſopher who lived but a bad life, that he was utterly inexcuſable, *quod in eo cujus magiſter eſſe vult labitur, artem vitæ profeſſus, delinquit in vitâ*; "becauſe he failed in that wherein "he pretended to be a maſter, and while he pro-"feſſed to have an art of living better than other "men, he offended and miſcarried in his life:" all defects in the practice, and in the virtues of a good life, may with much more reaſon and juſtice be upbraided

upbraided to chriſtians, to thoſe "who have learned SERM.
"CHRIST, who have heard him, and been taught CCVI.
"by him, as the truth is in JESUS;" to thoſe who are bleſſed with the cleareſt and moſt perfect revelation which ever GOD made to the world, the holieſt and moſt reaſonable religion, which furniſheth us with the beſt counſels and directions, the moſt prevalent motives and arguments, and the greateſt helps and advantages to a good life; a religion plain and ſimple, that hath leſs of outward form and pomp, and more of ſubſtance and reality, than any religion that ever was known in the world.

What a ſad thing is it, that a religion ſo wholly fitted and calculated to the deſign and purpoſe of a good life, armed with ſuch powerful conſiderations to engage men thereto, ſhould yet have ſo little force and power upon the lives of men, as we ſee it generally to have! as if "the grace of GOD had never "appeared to men, to teach them to deny ungodli-"neſs and worldly luſts, and to live ſoberly, and "righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world."

There was hardly ever any age, wherein the form of religion did more abound, and there were greater variety in them; and it is to be feared that there was never leſs of the power and efficacy of it.

I will inſtance in two great defects in the lives and practice of chriſtians, which are viſible to every one, but are ſad indications how little the power of religion prevails among men; I mean the want of common honeſty and integrity among men, and the want of peace and love; the firſt of which is, the great virtue of civil converſation, and the other the great bond both of civil and eccleſiaſtical ſocieties. Theſe are two great duties of religion frequently mentioned, and

SERM. CCVI. ſtrictly charged upon the conſciences of men in ſcripture: and yet how rare is the practice of them in the lives of chriſtians? theſe are two main defects in religion, and a plain demonſtration of "a form of religion, without the power of it."

I. The want of common honeſty and integrity among men. So indeed it uſed to be called, common honeſty; but it grows ſo rare now, that it is like to loſe that name. "Righteouſneſs, truth and faithfulneſs "are almoſt failed from among the children of men;" all ranks of men have corrupted themſelves in this kind; this is grown almoſt an univerſal depravation, there is hardly any trade or profeſſion which hath not ſomething of knavery and falſhood woven into the very myſtery of it, and is become almoſt a neceſſary part of it. Where is the generous honeſty and uprightneſs which did heretofore poſſeſs the ſpirits of men, and which is an inſeparable companion of true courage? but we are now paſſing apace into foreign manners and vices, and any form of religion will ſerve, when juſtice and integrity are gone.

II. The want of peace and love. How full of factions and diviſions are we? and theſe managed with all imaginable heat and animoſity one toward another; as if the badge of chriſtianity were changed, and our SAVIOUR had ſaid, "hereby "ſhall all men know that ye are my diſciples, if ye "hate one another."

All the differences among chriſtians, of what denomination ſoever, are ſadly to be lamented; but I almoſt deſpair as to the difference between us and the church of Rome, becauſe the reconciliation is impoſſible, unleſs they renounce their principles. They cannot come over to us, becauſe they think they are infallible;

fallible; and we cannot paſs over to them, becauſe we know they are deceived; ſo that there is "a great "gulf between us and them." We muſt not only renounce the ſcriptures, but our reaſon and our ſenſes, to be of their mind. We cannot communicate with them in the ſacrament, becauſe they have taken away one half of it, which is as plainly inſtituted and commanded, as the other part which is left. We cannot worſhip the virgin Mary, and the ſaints, much leſs their images, becauſe it is written, "thou ſhalt wor-"ſhip the LORD thy GOD, and him only ſhalt "thou ſerve. Thou ſhalt not make to thyſelf any "graven image, nor the likeneſs of any thing that is "in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the "water under the earth; thou ſhalt not bow down "to them, nor worſhip them; for I the LORD thy "GOD am a jealous GOD." In ſhort, ſeveral of their articles of faith are ſuch, as no credulity can ſwallow; and ſeveral parts of their worſhip are ſuch, as no piety can join with. SERM. CCVI.

But this we bewail, that thoſe who agree in the ſame eſſentials of faith and worſhip, ſhould be ſo forward to divide and ſeparate from one another, merely upon forms of government, and circumſtances of worſhip. What can juſtify the breach of communion and peace upon ſuch terms? either church government is of divine right, or it is not. If it be, why do not men ſubmit to the form which is eſtabliſh'd by authority? if it be not, what kind of government can contend for that right, with any equality of advantage, againſt that which cannot be denied to have almoſt univerſally obtained in moſt ages and parts of the chriſtian world?

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As for the circumſtances of worſhip there is ſcarce any man hath the face to contend, that any of thoſe uſed in our church are clearly condemned by the word of GOD; and what elſe can make them unlawful? One of the chief cauſes of ſeparation, is a form of prayer; the lawfulneſs of which our SAVIOUR hath abundantly juſtified, and I do not think was ever queſtioned by any writer in the chriſtian church, for near upon ſixteen hundred years; and is it worth while to break the peace of the church, and violate one of the greateſt precepts of chriſtianity, upon little and ſlight pretences of unlawfulneſs, and doubtful reaſons of convenience and expedience; and about ſuch things as are no more reaſonable grounds of quarrels among chriſtians, than the differences of mens ſtature and faces would be a juſt ground for mankind to make war upon one another?

Where is the power of religion, when the peace and unity of chriſtians is violated upon theſe terms? It is a ſign that the life and ſubſtance of religion is little regarded by us, when men can afford to employ ſo much zeal about theſe things.

And that men may be effectually perſuaded to mind the ſubſtance of religion more, let me deſire them to imprint theſe three conſiderations upon their minds.

I. That the parts of religion are ſubordinate to one another, and are to be minded each in their due place. The means of religion are leſs worth than the end, and therefore deſerve our regard chiefly in order to that. The circumſtances of religion are leſs conſiderable, than the means and inſtruments of it, and therefore are to be ſubordinated to them. Faith is in order to the practice of a good life, and ſignifies nothing, unleſs it produces that. So that the iſſue and

and upſhot of all, is a holy and virtuous life, "to SERM. "deny ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and to live CCVI. "ſoberly, and righteouſly, and godly in this preſent "world; to love GOD and our neighbour;" to deal juſtly, and to be kind, and peaceable, and charitable towards all men.

II. Conſider that religion conſiſts in an entire and univerſal obedience to the will of GOD, in "a re-"ſpect to all his commandments," and "hating eve-"ry evil way." Here "the power of godlineſs" "conſiſts in being "holy in all manner of converſa-"tion."

III. Conſider that religion chiefly reſpects GOD, and another world. A form of religion, if it were artificially contrived, might poſſibly ſerve to cheat men, and be uſeful enough to all the intereſts and advantages of this world: but we are to do all things in reference to GOD, who cannot be impoſed upon with ſhews and pretences; and with regard to another world, where no form of religion will be current without "the power of it." Yea, and in reference to this world, if there be any advantage in ſeeming religious, certainly the beſt way "to ſeem to be ſo, "is to be ſo indeed."

SER-

# SERMON CCVII.

## Of the neceſſity of good works.

TIT. iii. 8.

*This is a faithful ſaying, and theſe things I will that thou affirm conſtantly, that they which have believed in* GOD, *might be careful to maintain good works. Theſe things are good and profitable unto men.*

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THIS epiſtle of St. Paul to Titus, whom he had made biſhop of Crete, contains directions how he ought to demean himſelf in that great charge.

1. By appointing in every city biſhops or elders, to teach and govern thoſe that were already, or ſhould afterwards by their means be converted to the faith of CHRIST; and to be very careful to make choice of worthy and fit perſons into this high office; men of ſound doctrine, and unblameable lives, chap. i. from ver. 5. to the end.

2. By his own doctrine and converſation among them. And this is the ſubject of the two following chapters, in which he gives him a ſtrict charge, to be very careful both of his doctrine and his life. Of his doctrine that it be according to the ſoundneſs and purity of the goſpel; not ſuch corrupt and adulterate ſtuff as the falſe apoſtles and teachers were wont to vend among them. chap. ii. 1. "But "ſpeak thou the things which become ſound doc-"trine;" which he elſewhere calls "the doctrine of "truth which is according to godlineſs," ſuch a doctrine

doctrine as tends to reform the lives of men, to make them better, and more like to GOD. And then he ſhould be careful likewiſe, that his life and converſation be exemplary in all virtue and goodneſs; without which the beſt words will be of little weight, and the wiſeſt doctrines and counſels of ſmall efficacy and force to perſuade others to the practice of them, ver. 7. "In "all things ſhewing thyſelf a pattern of good works." When ſound doctrine is ſeconded by the good life of the teacher, it muſt have great authority and force of perſuaſion, ver. 15. "Theſe things ſpeak, and exhort, "and rebuke with all authority; let no man deſpiſe "thee." If the miniſter of GOD do but ſo preach and ſo live, this will give him authority, and ſet him above contempt; let men deſpiſe ſuch an one if they can.

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More particularly, as he would have him inſtruct men in general in all the virtues of a good life; ſo more eſpecially, the ſeveral ages and conditions of men in the duties and virtues reſpectively belonging to them; to young and old, men and women.

And becauſe great ſcandal had been brought upon the chriſtian religion, by the undutiful carriage of ſervants and ſubjects towards their maſters and magiſtrates, upon a falſe notion of chriſtian liberty, advanc'd and propagated by the falſe apoſtles and gnoſtick libertines, he gives Titus in particular, charge to put chriſtians in mind of their duty in this particular, and to inculcate it earneſtly upon them, that the chriſtian religion might not be ſlandered upon this account, chap. ii. ver. 9, 10. "Exhort ſervants to be "obedient to their maſters, &c. that they may adorn "the doctrine of GOD our SAVIOUR in all things." Chap. iii. 1. "Put them in mind to be ſubject to prin-"cipalities and powers, and to be ready to every "good

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" good work;" that is, in ſhort, to endeavour to be good in all relations, and in all ſorts and kinds of goodneſs.

And then, ver 8. he lays great ſtreſs and weight upon this matter, that chriſtians ſhould conſtantly and upon all occaſions be taught the great neceſſity of the virtues of a good life. " This is a faithful ſaying," &c. By which ſolemn and vehement kind of expreſſion, the apoſtle ſeems to inſinuate, that the falſe apoſtles did exalt the virtue of faith, to the prejudice and neglect of a good life; as if by a mere ſpeculative belief and profeſſion of the chriſtian religion men were diſcharged and releaſed from the practice of all virtue and goodneſs. And this is very probable, becauſe we find theſe kind of licentious doctrines very frequently reflected on, and reproved by the apoſtles in their epiſtles, and eſpecially by St. Paul. The falſe apoſtles made the chriſtian religion a matter of mere ſpeculation and diſpute, but laid no weight upon the virtues of a good life. And therefore St. Paul, after he had charged Titus to inculcate upon chriſtians the neceſſity of good works, immediately adds, " but avoid fooliſh " queſtions, and genealogies, and contentions, and " ſtrivings about the law; for they are unprofitable " and vain;" intimating that the falſe apoſtles, inſtead of preſſing the neceſſity of a good life, did amuſe people with theſe idle notions and diſputes.

But to return to my text. " This is a faithful ſay- " ing." This kind of preface the apoſtle uſeth ſeveral times, but always when he is ſpeaking of ſomething that is of great weight and concernment to us, and which deſerves our ſerious attention and regard; as in 1 Tim. i. 15. " This is a faithful ſaying, and " worthy of all acceptation, that JESUS CHRIST " came

" came into the world to ſave ſinners." 1 Tim. iv. 8. SERM.
" Godlineſs is profitable unto all things; having the CCVII.
" promiſe of the life that now is, and of that which
" is to come. This is a faithful ſaying." And 2 Tim.
ii. 11, 12. " This is a faithful ſaying; if we be dead
" with him, we ſhall alſo live with him; if we ſuffer,
" we ſhall alſo reign with him: if we deny him, he
" alſo will deny us." And ſo likewiſe here in the text, " this is a faithful ſaying, that they which have
" believed in GOD, ſhould be careful to maintain
" good works." By which you ſee, that it is not a form which the apoſtle uſeth of courſe, and applies to any thing, but only to things of more than ordinary conſideration and regard, ſuch as are of the eſſence of chriſtianity, and fundamental to the belief and practice of it.

" This is a faithful ſaying," πιστὸς λόγος, " a cre-
" dible ſaying," that which every man that truly underſtands the nature and deſign of religion will readily aſſent to.

" And this I will that thou affirm conſtantly." He chargeth him to preach this upon all occaſions, leſt the doctrine of juſtification by faith and by grace, without any works of righteouſneſs proceeding, ſhould be turned into licentiouſneſs, as it had been by ſome, and men ſhould falſly conclude, that becauſe works of righteouſneſs were not neceſſary before juſtification, and to bring men into that ſtate, they were not neceſſary neither afterwards to our continuance in that ſtate.

The apoſtle indeed did teach that " GOD did juſtify
" the ungodly," by the grace of the goſpel, and faith in CHRIST, that is, that thoſe who did ſincerely believe and embrace the goſpel, though they had been never

SERM. CCVII. never ſo great ſinners before, were juſtified upon that faith, that is, all their former ſins were forgiven, and they were received into the favour of GOD. But though works of righteouſneſs were not neceſſary before their juſtification, yet they are neceſſary afterwards, becauſe the faith of the goſpel, and the embracing of chriſtianity, doth imply a ſtipulation and engagement on our part, to live according to the laws and rules of the goſpel, which do ſtrictly enjoin all kind of virtue and goodneſs. The covenant of baptiſm, by which we are enter'd into chriſtianity, doth contain on our part not only a profeſſion of faith in CHRIST, but a ſolemn promiſe "to deny ungodli-"neſs and worldly luſts, and to live ſoberly, and righ-"teouſly, and godly in this preſent world." So that it is the greateſt miſtake in the world to think, that becauſe we are juſtified by faith and the profeſſion of chriſtianity without works of righteouſneſs, therefore we are under no obligation to a good life: for faith in CHRIST, and the ſincere profeſſion of the chriſtian religion doth imply a good life, and an engagement to the practice of all virtue and goodneſs, which if we do not perform and make good, we fail in our part of the covenant, and thereby forfeit all the bleſſings and benefits promiſed therein on GOD's part.

Therefore it is obſervable, that the apoſtle, after he had ſpoken of our juſtification by grace without works of righteouſneſs, gives this charge to Titus, to preſs the neceſſity of good works upon thoſe who did believe and embrace the profeſſion of the goſpel, as it were on purpoſe to prevent all miſtake and abuſe of the doctrine of juſtification by faith, and the free grace and mercy of GOD in JESUS CHRIST, ver. 5, 6, 7. "Not by works of righteouſneſs which we have done;

"but

" but according to his mercy he ſaved us, by the SERM.
" waſhing of regeneration, and the renewing of the CCVII.
" HOLY GHOST, which he ſhed on us abundantly
" through JESUS CHRIST our SAVIOUR," that is, by our ſolemn profeſſion of chriſtianity at our baptiſm; " that being juſtified by his grace, we ſhould " be made heirs, according to the hope of eternal life." And then he adds, ver. 8. " This is a faithful ſaying, " and theſe things I will that thou affirm conſtantly, " that they which have believed in GOD, might be " careful to maintain good works;" that is, that they who are thus juſtified by the faith of the goſpel, ſhould be ſo far from thinking themſelves hereby excuſed from good works, that they ſhould upon this account be more careful to maintain and practiſe them, becauſe by the very profeſſion of the chriſtian faith and religion they have ſolemnly engaged themſelves ſo to do.

" That they which believe in GOD;" that is, who have taken upon them the profeſſion of chriſtianity in their baptiſm. For it is not improbable, that the apoſtle having ſpoken of baptiſm juſt before, may by this phraſe of " believing in GOD," refer to that profeſſion of faith made in baptiſm, which began with theſe words, " I believe in GOD;" and then, " they which " have believed in GOD," are thoſe who in baptiſm have made a ſolemn profeſſion of chriſtianity: as if he had ſaid, " theſe things I will that thou affirm con- " ſtantly, that all that profeſs themſelves chriſtians " be careful to maintain good works." Or if by the phraſe of " believing in GOD," we will underſtand an aſſent to all divine revelations, more eſpecially that of the goſpel, and the chriſtian religion, the moſt perfect that ever GOD made of his will to mankind, the matter will come much to the ſame iſſue.

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"Be careful to maintain good works." This phraſe ſeems in the latter end of this epiſtle, to be uſed in a very reſtrained ſenſe; for labouring in an honeſt calling, ver. 14. "Let ours alſo learn to maintain good "works for neceſſary uſes, that they be not unfruit-"ful." In the margin of your bibles you will find it render'd, to profeſs honeſt trades, "let ours alſo learn "to profeſs honeſt trades for neceſſary uſes," that is, for the ſupply of their neceſſities: but in the text it ſeems more agreeable to the ſcope of the apoſtle's diſcourſe to underſtand the phraſe of "maintaining good "works," for the practice of all chriſtian virtues, eſpecially thoſe which are more uſeful and beneficial to humane ſociety; among which, diligence and induſtry in an honeſt calling is none of the leaſt conſiderable, becauſe it follows, "theſe things are good and "profitable unto men." And indeed theſe are properly works of goodneſs, which redound to the publick benefit and advantage.

But good works may well be taken in a larger ſenſe for all ſorts of virtuous actions. And ſo it is certainly uſed ſeveral times in this epiſtle, chap. i. 16. "Unto every good work reprobate," ſpeaking of all profligate perſons who were loſt to all virtue and goodneſs. Chap. ii. 7. "In all things ſhewing thyſelf a pat-"tern of good works," that is, an example of all kind of virtue. And chap. iii. 1. "Put them in "mind to be ſubject to principalities and powers, to "obey magiſtrates, and to be ready to every good "work;" that is, to the practice of all goodneſs, of whatſoever is honeſt and virtuous in itſelf, amiable and commendable in the ſight of others, uſeful and beneficial to any.

Having thus explained the words, I come now to conſider the two points contained in them. Firſt,

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Firſt, the certain truth and credibility of this ſaying or propoſition, that they which have believed in GOD, ought to be careful to maintain good works. "This "is a faithful ſaying," that is, a moſt evident and credible truth. And,

Secondly, the great fitneſs and neceſſity of inculcating this upon all chriſtians, that the chriſtian religion doth indiſpenſably require the virtues of a good life. "Theſe things I will that thou affirm conſtant-"ly, &c." I begin with the

Firſt of theſe points, viz. the certain truth and evident credibility of this ſaying or propoſition, that "they which have believed in GOD, ſhould be careful "to maintain good works. This is a faithful ſaying, "πιστὸς λόγος, a ſaying worthy of credit, a moſt certain "and credible truth." And it will appear to be ſo, whether we conſider the great end and deſign of religion in general, or of the chriſtian religion in particular.

I. If we conſider the great end and deſign of religion in general, which is to make us happy, by poſſeſſing our minds with the belief of a GOD, and thoſe other principles which have a neceſſary connexion with that belief: and by obliging us to the obedience and practice of his laws.

1. By poſſeſſing our minds with the belief of a GOD, and of thoſe other principles which have a neceſſary connexion with it. Such are the belief of the divine perfections, of the infinite goodneſs, and wiſdom, and power, and truth, and juſtice, and purity of the divine nature; a firm perſuaſion of his providence, that he governs and adminiſters the affairs of the world, and takes notice of the actions of men, and will call them to an account for them; of the immortality of our ſouls, and their endleſs duration after death; and conſequently

SERM. CCVII. of the eternal rewards and puniſhments of another life. Theſe are the great principles of natural religion, which mankind are in ſome meaſure poſſeſt with, and perſuaded of, without any external revelation from GOD; and theſe are neceſſary and fundamental to religion, as the apoſtle to the Hebrews declares, Heb. xi. 6. "Without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe GOD;" that is, there can be no ſuch thing as the practice of religion, without the belief of the principles of it; and what theſe are he tells us in the next words: "he that "cometh to GOD muſt believe that he is, and that he "is a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him."

But then we muſt not reſt here, in the belief of a GOD and the principles of religion; for this faith is not required of us for itſelf, but in order to ſome farther end, which if it be not attained by us, the mere belief of the principles of religion is to no purpoſe, neither acceptable to GOD, nor uſeful and beneficial to ourſelves. GOD would not have imprinted the notion of himſelf upon our nature, he would not have diſcovered himſelf to us, nor have acquired of us the belief of his being and providence, merely that we might know there is ſuch a being as GOD in the world, who made us and governs us; but that this belief might have its proper influence upon us, to oblige us to the obedience of his laws, which are the proper cauſes and means of our happineſs. It will not avail us at all, nor is it in the leaſt acceptable to GOD, for men "to profeſs that they know him," when in "works they deny him, being abominable and diſ-"obedient, and to every good work reprobate," as the apoſtle deſcribes ſome, chap. i. 16. And therefore,

2. The great end and deſign of religion is, that our minds being poſſeſt and prepared by the principles of religion,

religion, the belief of theſe ſhould have its proper influence upon us, which is effectually to oblige us to the obedience and practice of GOD's laws. Now the laws which GOD hath given us to live by, as they are the rule and meaſure of our duty, by the performance whereof only we can hope to gain the favour of GOD, ſo they are the proper directions and means in order to our happineſs; they teach us both the conditions of our happineſs; and the proper qualification and diſpoſition for it. SERM. CCVII.

Obedience to the laws of GOD is the condition of our happineſs, both temporal and eternal, both in this world and the other. The promiſes which GOD hath made of temporal felicity and bleſſings, are upon condition of our obedience to his laws; it is "godlineſs "only that hath the promiſe of this life, as well as of "the other," 1 Tim. iv. 8. A truth ſo certain and evident, that the apoſtle thought fit to add that ſolemn ſeal to it, which he prefaceth to the ſaying in the text, "this "is a faithful ſaying." And though GOD be pleaſed, out of his exceſſive goodneſs to beſtow many temporal bleſſings and favours upon very bad men, that by this "goodneſs of his he might lead them to repen-"tance;" yet GOD never made any promiſe of temporal bleſſings to wicked men; but on the contrary, hath threatned them with great temporal evils and calamities; but all the promiſes even of temporal good things, are made to the obeying of GOD's laws; "to them that keep his covenant, and remember his "commandments to do them."

And this is not only the condition upon which the promiſes of temporal bleſſings are ſuſpended, but generally, and for the moſt part, the natural cauſe and means of thoſe bleſſings; for there is no moral duty

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enjoined by GOD, no virtue the practice whereof he requires from us, which does not naturally tend to our temporal felicity in this world; as temperance and chaſtity to that invaluable bleſſing of health, and to the preſervation of our eſtate, which is waſted by lewd and riotous living; humility and meekneſs to our quiet and ſafety; juſtice and integrity to our reputation and honour, one of the chief inſtruments of temporal proſperity and ſucceſs. Kindneſs and charity, and a readineſs "to do good to all men as we have opportunity," are in their nature apt to recommend us exceedingly to the love and eſteem of all men, and to their favourable regard and aſſiſtance, when we ſtand in need of it. And ſo I might inſtance in all other virtues, the ſincere practice whereof, though it be not in all caſes certain and infallible, yet it is the beſt and wiſeſt courſe that any man can take, to attain the greateſt happineſs which this world can afford, and to avoid the greateſt miſeries and calamities of it: as on the contrary, there is no vice, no wicked practice, but is naturally productive of ſome great temporal miſchief and inconvenience.

And then the practice of virtue and goodneſs, as it is the abſolute and indiſpenſable condition of our future happineſs in another world, ſo is it the neceſſary and only proper qualification for it, and the certain and infallible means of attaining it.

It is an abſolute and indiſpenſable condition of attaining it; and without this it is in vain to hope for it. As GOD will certainly puniſh the tranſgreſſors of his laws; ſo nothing but obedience to them can pretend to his rewards. This GOD hath moſt expreſly declared, that "without purity and holineſs no man ſhall ſee "him;" that "CHRIST is the author of eternal "ſalvation only to them that obey him." And if GOD

GOD had not declared this in his word, the conſideration of GOD's eſſential holineſs and juſtice would ſufficiently aſſure us of it. SERM. CCVII.

But beſides this, in the very nature and reaſon of the thing, holineſs and goodneſs is the neceſſary and only proper qualification for happineſs. Without the bleſſed ſight and enjoyment of GOD we cannot be happy, and holineſs and goodneſs can only qualify us for this. For happineſs is a ſtate which reſults from a temper and diſpoſition of mind ſuited to it; and where this is wanting, the man is no more capable of happineſs, than he that is ſick is of eaſe. Virtue and goodneſs are ſo eſſential to happineſs, that where theſe are not, there is no capacity of it. Theſe make us like to GOD, who is the fountain and pattern of all happineſs; and if we be not like to GOD, we can have no enjoyment of him. And a wicked man, if he could ſteal into heaven, into the ſight and preſence of GOD, would from the temper and diſpoſition of his own mind, ſo unſuitable to that holy place and company, be extremely miſerable, even in the manſions of the bleſſed. Such a temper of mind, ſuch a polluted and guilty conſcience, as a ſinner carries with him out of this world, will accompany him, and remain with him in the other; and guilt is always reſtleſs and full of torment, and though GOD ſhould not puniſh it with any poſitive infliction of pain, would of its own nature make a man for ever miſerable. So that it is a vain dream and imagination, that any man without the practice of holineſs in and virtue in this life, can be happy in the other. A ſincere and thorough repentance of all our ſins will indeed clear our conſciences of guilt, and by the mercy of GOD make us capable of happineſs: but it does this by changing our minds, and reconciling them to

holineſs and goodneſs, in firm purpoſe and reſolution of a new life; and by changing our lives and actions too, if there be opportunity for it; but till this change be wrought, either in firm purpoſe, or in real effect, it is impoſſible we ſhould be happy. And though I will not deny but this may be done by a deep repentance, and ſuch as GOD ſees would prove ſincere, in the laſt act of our lives: yet it is extreme madneſs to run ſuch a hazard, becauſe we may be cut off from the opportunity of it; or if GOD ſhould afford us time and grace to that purpoſe, it is the hardeſt thing in the world to have any comfortable and well-grounded aſſurance of the ſincerity of it. So that very little hopes of heaven and happineſs can be given upon any other terms, than the general and conſtant courſe of a holy and virtuous life; and leaſt of all to thoſe who have all their life long reſolved to venture their everlaſting happineſs, upon the infinite uncertainties of a death-bed repentance at the laſt. But,

II. The truth of this propoſition, that "they which "have believed in GOD, ſhould be careful to maintain "good works," or that faith and the virtues of a good life ought to go together: I ſay, the truth of this will yet be more evident, if we conſider the great end and deſign of the chriſtian religion in particular, which was to reform the world, to purify the hearts and lives of men from corrupt affections and wicked practices, to teach men to excel in all kinds of virtue and goodneſs.

And this is every where in the new teſtament moſt expreſly declared. The great promiſe of bleſſedneſs is made to the virtues of meekneſs, and patience, and peaceableneſs, and purity, and righteouſneſs, as our SAVIOUR expreſly teacheth in that excellent ſermon of his upon the mount, which is the ſummary of the chriſtian

ſtian religion. Epheſ. iv. 17,18,&c. "This I ſay there- SERM.
"fore, and teſtify in the LORD, that ye henceforth," CCVII.
that is, now that ye have embraced chriſtianity, "walk
"not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their
"mind, having the underſtanding darkned, being alie-
"nated from the life of GOD through the ignorance
"that is in them, becauſe of the blindneſs of their
"heart: who being paſt feeling, have given them-
"ſelves over unto laſciviouſneſs, to work all uncleanneſs
"with greedineſs. But ye have not ſo learned CHRIST:
"if ſo be that ye have heard him, and have been taught
"by him, as the truth is in JESUS; that ye put off,
"concerning the former converſation, the old man,
"which is corrupt according to the deceitful luſts;
"and be renewed in the ſpirit of your mind; and that
"ye put on the new man, which after GOD is created in
"righteouſneſs and true holineſs. Wherefore putting
"away lying, ſpeak every man truth with his neigh-
"bour: for we are members one of another. Be ye angry
"and ſin not, let not the ſun go down upon your wrath:
"neither give place to the devil. Let him that ſtole, ſteal
"no more; but rather let him labour, working with
"his hands the thing which is good, that he may have
"to give to him that needeth. Let no corrupt com-
"munication proceed out of your mouth, but that
"which is good to the uſe of edifying, that it may
"miniſter grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the
"HOLY SPIRIT of GOD, whereby ye are ſealed
"unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterneſs, and
"wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil ſpeaking be
"put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind
"one to another, &c." So that you ſee, that unleſs
there be an univerſal reformation of heart and life, we
have not "ſo learned CHRIST as the truth is in JESUS."

we

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we do not rightly underſtand the goſpel, and the tendency of the chriſtian religion. Gal. v. 22, 23, 24. "But the fruits of the SPIRIT," of that SPIRIT which the chriſtian religion endows men withal, "is love, joy, peace, long-ſuffering, gentleneſs, goodneſs, fidelity, meekneſs, temperance; and they that are CHRIST's, have crucified the fleſh with the affections and luſts;" that is, they that profeſs themſelves chriſtians, are obliged to endeavour after all theſe virtues, and to put off the contrary luſts and vices. Phil. iv. 8. "Finally, brethren, whatſoever things are true, whatſoever things are honeſt, whatſoever things are juſt, whatſoever things are pure, whatſoever things are lovely, whatſoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praiſe, think on theſe things." St. James likewiſe declares to the ſame purpoſe the genuine effect of chriſtianity, which he calls "the knowledge and wiſdom which is from above." James iii. 13, 14, 15, 17. "Who is a wiſe man, and endowed with knowledge amongſt you? let him ſhew out of a good converſation his works with meekneſs and wiſdom. But if ye have bitter envying and ſtrife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not againſt the truth. This wiſdom deſcendeth not from above; but is earthly, ſenſual, deviliſh." And "the wiſdom that is from above, is firſt pure, then peaceable, gentle, and eaſy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocriſy." To which I will add but one text more, which is the ſum and comprehenſion of all the reſt, and it is chap. ii. of this epiſtle to Titus, ver. 11. "The grace of GOD," ſo he calls the doctrine of the goſpel, "the grace of GOD which brings ſalvation unto all men,

" hath appeared, teaching us that denying ungodlineſs SERM.
" and worldly luſts, we ſhould live ſoberly, and righ- CCVII.
" teouſly and godly in this preſent world."

I might proceed particularly to ſhew, that the whole diſpenſation and doctrine of the goſpel, and all the parts of them, are calculated to raiſe and exalt humane nature to the higheſt pitch and perfection of virtue and goodneſs, and effectually to reform the ſpirits and lives of men.

The diſpenſation of the goſpel, or the chriſtian religion, conſiſts in GOD's merciful condeſcenſion to ſend his own and only SON in our nature, to live among us, and to die for us. The doctrine of the goſpel conſiſts in the things to be believed; the duties to be practiſed by us; and the arguments and encouragements to the practice of thoſe duties. Now I ſhall briefly ſhew, that the deſign of every part, both of the diſpenſation and doctrine of the goſpel, is to reform the minds and manners of men, and to engage them to the practice of all virtue and goodneſs. And,

I. For the diſpenſation of the goſpel, by which I mean the gracious method which the wiſdom of GOD hath pitched upon for the ſalvation and recovery of mankind, by ſending his only begotten SON into the world in our nature, to live among us, and to die for us. So that the principal parts of this diſpenſation are theſe three:

1. His incarnation, or appearing in our nature.

2. His life.

3. His death and ſufferings for us. And I ſhall ſhew, that the great deſign of all this was to reform mankind, and make them better.

1. For his incarnation. The great deſign of his coming into the world, and appearing in our nature, was this;

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this; and this was the reaſon of the name JESUS, given him at his birth, as the angel tells us, Matth. i. 21. "His name ſhall be called JESUS, for he ſhall ſave "his people from their ſins." Matth. ix. 13. He himſelf tells us, that "he came to call ſinners to repentance;" that is, to reclaim them to a better and more virtuous courſe of life; and chap. xviii. 11. "The SON of man "is come to ſave that which was loſt," that is, to recover mankind from a ſtate of ſin and miſery, to a ſtate of holineſs and happineſs. And St. Peter, exhorting the Jews to repentance, uſeth this argument, that for this very end GOD ſent him among them, Acts iii. 26. "Unto you firſt GOD ſent him to bleſs you, in turn-"ing away every one of you from his iniquity." Heb. ix. 26. "But now once in the end of the world he "hath appeared to aboliſh ſin," that is, to deſtroy both the guilt and power of ſin. 1 John iii. 5. "Ye "know that he was manifeſted to take away our ſins." And ver. 8. "For this purpoſe the SON of GOD "was manifeſted, to deſtroy the works of the devil."

2. This likewiſe was the great deſign of his life, of his dwelling and converſing with us ſo long, to teach us by his doctrine in all holineſs and virtue, and to give us the perfect pattern and example of it in his life. For his doctrine, I have ſpoke of that by itſelf: but beſides that, one principal end of his living amongſt us, was, that in the courſe of his life, and all the actions of it, he might give us a perfect and familiar example of all holineſs and virtue, and therefore we are commanded to take him for our great pattern. "Learn of me, ſaith he, for I am meek "and lowly of ſpirit," Matth. xi. 29. John xiii. 15. after that great inſtance of his humility, in waſhing his diſciples feet, he adds, "for I have given you an

"example,

'example, that ye should do as I have done to 'you."

3. This also was the great design of his death and sufferings. So the apostles every were teach: Gal. i. 4. speaking of CHRIST, "who gave himself for our 'sins, that he might deliver us from this present 'evil world," that is, that he might rescue us from the vicious customs and practices of the world. 1 Pet. i. 18. "Forasmuch as ye know, that ye were not re-'deemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, 'from your vain conversation; but with the preci-'ous blood of CHRIST, as of a lamb without ble-'mish and without spot." The death and suffer-ings of CHRIST did not only make expiation for our sins, but are proposed to us as a pattern of mor-tification to sin, and resurrection to a new life, and a most powerful argument thereto. Rom. vi. 1, 2, 3, &c. And 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. speaking of the love of CHRIST in lying down his life for us, "for the 'love of CHRIST, saith he, constraineth us, be-'cause we thus judge; that if one died for all, then 'were all dead: and that he died for all, that they 'which live, should not henceforth live unto them-'selves, but unto him which died for them." From whence he infers, ver. 17. "Therefore if any man 'be in CHRIST, he is a new creature: old things are 'pass'd away; behold, all things are become new." And ver. 21. "For he hath made him to be sin for 'us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the 'righteousness of GOD in him;" that is, he hath made him who was without sin, a sacrifice for our sins; which should be a strong motive and argument to us, to endeavour after "the righteousness of GOD."

II. As the whole dispensation of the gospel tends to

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to this end, ſo more particularly does the doctrine of the goſpel, and every part of it. Now the whole doctrine of the goſpel may be refer'd to theſe three heads:

1. The things to be believed by us.

2. The duties to be practiſed. And,

3. The arguments and encouragements to the practice of theſe duties. And all theſe have a moſt direct and proper tendency to reform mankind, and effectually to engage us to the practice of holineſs and virtue.

1. The matters of faith propoſed in the goſpel, have a direct tendency to a good life, and immediate influence upon it. All the articles of our creed, and whatever the chriſtian religion propoſeth to our belief concerning GOD the FATHER, the creator and governor of all things; and concerning JESUS CHRIST our LORD and SAVIOUR; and concerning the HOLY SPIRIT of grace; the catholick church; the communion of ſaints; the reſurrection of the dead, and everlaſting life after death: all and each of theſe are ſo many arguments and reaſons, motives, and encouragements to a good life. In general, "our hearts are ſaid to be purified by "faith," Acts xv. 9. 1 Tim. i. 5. Faith is there reckoned among the principal ſources and fountains of a good life: "the end of the commandment, (the "word is παραγγελίας) the end of the goſpel declaration is charity, out of a pure heart, and a "good conſcience, and of faith unfeigned." So that a ſincere faith is the great principle of charity, which is "the fulfilling of the law," and comprehends in it the duties of both tables. And here I might particularly ſhew, what influence the ſeveral articles of the

chriſtian

chriſtian faith have upon the practice of holineſs and virtue in our lives; but this would be too large a field of diſcourſe; and the thing is very plain and obvious to every man's conſideration; and therefore I ſhall content myſelf with what I have ſaid in general concerning the influence of faith upon a good life.

2. The duties enjoined by the chriſtian religion do likewiſe tend more immediately to the ſame end and deſign; I mean the laws and precepts of the goſpel, which are nothing elſe but ſo many rules of a good life, and in the main ſubſtance of them are the laws of nature cleared and perfected. For "CHRIST came "not to deſtroy the law," which was in force before; but to explain and clear it, where, through the corruption and degeneracy of mankind, it was grown obſcure and doubtful, and to perfect it by ſuperadding ſome rules and precepts of greater goodneſs and perfection, than ſeem to have been enjoined by it; as to abſtain from all kind of revenge, to love our enemies, and not only to be ready to forgive them the greateſt injuries they have done us, but to do them the greateſt good, and even to be perfectly reconciled to them after the higheſt provocations, whenever they are in a meet capacity and diſpoſition for it. So that the precepts of the chriſtian religion are a plain and perfect rule of all virtue and goodneſs, and the beſt and moſt abſolute ſyſtem of moral philoſophy that ever was in the world, containing all the rules of virtue and a good life, which are ſcattered and diſperſed in the writings of the philoſophers, and the wiſe men of all ages, and delivering them to us with greater clearneſs and certainty, in a more ſimple and unaffected manner, with greater authority, force and efficacy upon their minds, than any philoſopher

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loſopher and lawgiver ever did; teaching us how to worſhip GOD in the beſt manner, and moſt ſuitable to his nature and perfections; how to demean ourſelves towards others with all meekneſs and humility, juſtice and integrity, kindneſs and charity; and how to govern our ſelves and our own unruly appetites and paſſions, and bring them within the bounds of reaſon, much better than any law or inſtitution that ever was in the world; and all theſe duties and virtues ſtrictly commanded and enjoined in the name and authority of GOD, by one evidently impowered and commiſſioned by him, and ſent from heaven on purpoſe to inſtruct us in the nature and practice of them. So that the doctrine of the goſpel, in reſpect of the laws and precepts of it, is a plain and perfect rule of a good life. And then,

3. The chriſtian religion contains the moſt powerful arguments and encouragements to this purpoſe; and theſe are the threatnings and promiſes of the goſpel.

(1.) The terrible threatnings of eternal miſery and puniſhments to all the workers of iniquity, and wilful and impenitent tranſgreſſors of theſe laws. And this is an argument which taketh the faſteſt and ſureſt hold upon humane nature, and will many times move and affect, when no other conſiderations will work upon us. Many men that could not be wrought upon by the love of GOD and goodneſs, nor by the hopes of everlaſting happineſs, have been affrighted and reclaimed from an evil courſe by the fear of hell and damnation, and the awe of a judgment to come. To think of lying under the terrible wrath and diſpleaſure of almighty GOD to eternal ages, of being extremely and for ever miſerable without intermiſſion and without end, muſt needs be a very diſmal conſideration

ſideration to any man that can think and conſider: SERM. CCVII.
" for who knows the power of GOD's anger, who " can dwell with everlaſting burnings?" and yet to this horrible danger, to this intolerable miſery, do all the workers of iniquity, every one that lives in the wilful contempt and diſobedience of the laws of the goſpel, expoſe themſelves; and this as expreſly revealed and declared to us, as it is poſſible for words to declare any thing, Matth. xiii. 40, 41, 42. " So " ſhall it be in the end of the world. The SON of " man ſhall ſend forth his angels, and they ſhall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, " and them which do iniquity, and ſhall caſt them " into a furnace of fire; there ſhall be wailing and " gnaſhing of teeth." Matth. xxv. 41. there you have the very ſentence recorded, which ſhall be pronounced upon ſinners at the great day; " then ſhall " the king ſay to them on his left hand," that is, to the wicked, " depart ye curſed into everlaſting fire, " prepared for the devil and his angels." And ver. 46. " Theſe ſhall go into everlaſting puniſh- " ment." And this is that which St. Paul tells us, renders the doctrine of the goſpel ſo powerful for the converſion and ſalvation of ſinners, Rom. i. 16. " I am not aſhamed of the goſpel of CHRIST, " becauſe it is the power of GOD to ſalvation, to every one that believeth." And ver. 18. " For " the wrath of GOD is revealed from heaven, againſt " all ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of men." And chap. ii. 8, 9. " To them that obey not the truth, " but obey unrighteouſneſs, indignation and wrath, " tribulation and anguiſh, upon every ſoul of man " that doth evil." Epheſ. v. 6. " Let no man de- " ceive you with vain words, for becauſe of theſe

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" things," viz. the ſins he had mentioned before, " cometh the wrath of GOD upon the children of " diſobedience." 2 Theſſ. i. 7, 8, 9. " When the " LORD JESUS," ſpeaking of the judgment of the great day, " ſhall be revealed from heaven with " his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking ven- " geance on them that know not GOD, and that " obey not the goſpel of our LORD JESUS " CHRIST, who ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſt- " ing deſtruction from the preſence of the LORD, " and from the glory of his power." So that the goſpel gives all imaginable diſcouragement to the tranſgreſſion and diſobedience of GOD's laws, by denunciation of the greateſt dread and terror that can be preſented to humane nature, enough to make any ſenſible and conſiderate man willing to do or forbear any thing, to eſcape ſo horrible danger, " to " cut off a foot or hand, or to pluck out an eye," not only to reſtrain nature in any thing, but even to offer violence to it, " rather than to be caſt into " hell-fire, where the worm dies not, and the fire is " not quenched," as our SAVIOUR expreſſeth it, Mark ix. 48. This is the firſt argument from the threatenings. The

(2.) Is from the promiſes of the goſpel, which are full encouragement to obedience; and there are three great promiſes made in the goſpel to repentance, and the obedience of GOD's laws.

1. The promiſe of pardon and forgiveneſs.

2. Of grace and aſſiſtance.

3. Of eternal life and happineſs. And theſe certainly contain all the encouragement we can deſire; that GOD will pardon what is paſt, aſſiſt us in well-doing for the future, and reward our perſeverance in it to

the

the end with eternal life; and all this is expreſly promiſed to us in the goſpel. SERM. CCVII.

1. The pardon and forgiveneſs of ſins paſt, Acts xiii. 38, 39. "Be it known unto you therefore, men "and brethren, that through this man is preached "unto you the forgiveneſs of ſins: and by him all "that believe are juſtified from all things, from "which ye could not be juſtified by the law of Moſes." And this is a great encouragement to amendment, to be fully indemnified from all paſt ſins and tranſgreſſions; and this promiſe is made to believing, which includes in it repentance and a better courſe.

2. The promiſe of grace and aſſiſtance to enable us to all the purpoſes of holineſs and obedience. And this our SAVIOUR hath moſt expreſly and emphatically promiſed to all that are ſincerely reſolved to make uſe of it; and that upon the eaſieſt condition that can be, if we do but earneſtly pray to GOD for it, telling us that we may with the ſame confidence and aſſurance of ſucceſs, (nay with much greater) aſk this of GOD, as we can any thing that is good, of the kindeſt father upon earth, Luke xi. 9. And ſurely here is a mighty encouragement to well-doing, to be aſſured that GOD is moſt ready to afford his grace and aſſiſtance to us to this purpoſe, if we heartily beg it of him. So that neither the conſideration of our own weakneſs, nor of the power of our ſpiritual enemies, can be any diſcouragement or juſt excuſe to us from doing our duty, ſince GOD offers us ſo freely all the ſtrength that we need, and to endow us with an inward principle of well-doing, more powerful and effectual to all the purpoſes of holineſs and virtue, than any oppoſition that can be raiſed againſt it. So St. John aſſures us, that we have GOD on our ſide, and the powerful

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aſſiſtance of his HOLY SPIRIT, and therefore are ſure of victory in this conflict; 1 John iv. 4. "Ye are of "GOD, little children, and have overcome; becauſe "greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the "world." If the SPIRIT of GOD be more powerful than the devil, we are of the ſtronger ſide; and we have no juſt cauſe to complain of our inability and weakneſs to do the will of GOD, ſince that ſtrength and aſſiſtance, which we may have for aſking, is to all effects and purpoſes of our own power. And therefore St. Paul made no ſcruple to call it ſo, and to ſay, he was able to do all things, "I am able to do all things "through CHRIST which ſtrengtheneth me."

3. The promiſe of eternal life: and this is the great promiſe of the goſpel, and the crown of all the reſt, 1 John ii. 25. "This is the promiſe that he hath "promiſed us, even eternal life." And this is a reward ſo great and glorious, and ſo infinitely beyond the portion of our ſervice and obedience, that nothing can be more encouraging. What ſhould not men do "in hopes of eternal life, which GOD that "cannot lye, hath promiſed to us?" The expectation of ſuch a reward, ſo well aſſured to us, is ſufficient to encourage us to do our utmoſt, and to ſtrain all our powers for the ſecuring and attaining of it, which we cannot do without holineſs and obedience of life; for "without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the LORD." So that all the promiſes of the goſpel are to encourage and ſtrengthen us in well-doing, "to make us "partakers of the divine nature," that we ſhould "cleanſe ourſelves from all filthineſs, and perfect ho-"lineſs in the fear of GOD."

Thus you ſee that the whole diſpenſation of the goſpel, and the doctrines of it, and every part of them, are

are all calculated to reform the minds and manners of men. This is the great deſign of the chriſtian religion, and all the parts and powers of it, to clear and confirm and perfect the natural law, to reinforce the obligation of moral duties by ſeverer threatnings, and greater promiſes, and to offer men more powerful grace and aſſiſtance to the practice of all goodneſs and virtue; and they do not underſtand the chriſtian religion, who imagine any other end and deſign of it. There is nothing that our SAVIOUR and his apoſtles do every where more vehemently declare, than that hearing and believing the doctrine of CHRIST ſignifies nothing, without the real virtues of a good life. "Know, O vain man, that faith without works "is dead," ſaith St. James. For men to think that the mere belief of the goſpel, without the fruits and effects of a good life, will ſave them, is a very fond and vain imagination. And thus much may ſuffice to have ſpoken concerning the firſt point.

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A Table

# A Table of the Texts of each Sermon.


SERMON CLXXXIII.

MARK xiii. 32, 33. *But of that day, and that hour knoweth no man, no not the angels which are in heaven, neither the* SON, *but the* FATHER. *Take ye heed, watch and pray; for ye know not when the time is.* Page 3.

SERMON CLXXXIV.

1 THESS. iv. 14. *For if we believe that* JESUS *died, and roſe again; even ſo them alſo which ſleep in* JESUS, *will* GOD *bring with him.* p. 30.

SERMON CLXXXV, CLXXXVI.

1 JOHN iii. 2. *It doth not yet appear what we ſhall be; but we know, that when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him; for we ſhall ſee him as he is.* p. 55, 70.

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PROV. xiv. 32. *The wicked is driven away in his wickedneſs: but the righteous hath hope in his death.* p. 86.

SERMON CLXXXVIII.

PSAL. xc. 12. *So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wiſdom.* p. 116.

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1 PET. ii. 21. —*Leaving us an example, that ye ſhould follow his ſteps.* p. 137, 155, 179.

SERMON CXCII.

1 COR. i. 23, 24. *But we preach* CHRIST *crucified, unto the Jews a ſtumbling-block, and unto the Greeks fooliſhneſs; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks,* CHRIST *the power of* GOD, *and the wiſdom of* GOD. p. 195.

SERMON CXCIII.

ACTS i. 3. *To whom alſo he ſhewed himſelf alive after his paſſion, by many infallible proofs, being ſeen of*

*of them forty days, and ſpeaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of* GOD. p. 215.

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SERMON CXCV.

COL. iii. 1, 2. *If ye then be riſen with* CHRIST, *ſeek thoſe things which are above, where* CHRIST *ſitteth at the right hand of* GOD. *Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth.* p. 251.

SERMON CXCVI.

ACTS i. 9, 10, 11, *And when he had ſpoken theſe things, while they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their ſight. And while they looked ſtedfaſtly toward heaven, as he went up, behold, two men ſtood by them in white apparel, which alſo ſaid, ye men of Galilee, why ſtand ye gazing up into heaven? this ſame* JESUS *which is taken up from you into heaven, ſhall ſo come in like manner, as ye have ſeen him go into heaven.* p. 267.

SERMON CXCVII.

ACTS ii. 1, 2, 3, 4, *And when the day of pentecoſt was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And ſuddenly there came a ſound from heaven, as of a mighty ruſhing wind, and it filled all the houſe where they were ſitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it ſat upon each of them. And they were filled with the* HOLY GHOST, *and began to ſpeak with other tongues, as the* SPIRIT *gave them utterance.* p. 286.

SERMON CXCVIII.

JOHN xvi. 7, 8. *Nevertheleſs, I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away. For if I go not away, the comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will ſend him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of ſin, and of righteouſneſs, and of judgment.* p. 308.

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